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A WINDOW IN  
FLEET STREET

*Life should be a great adventure.*

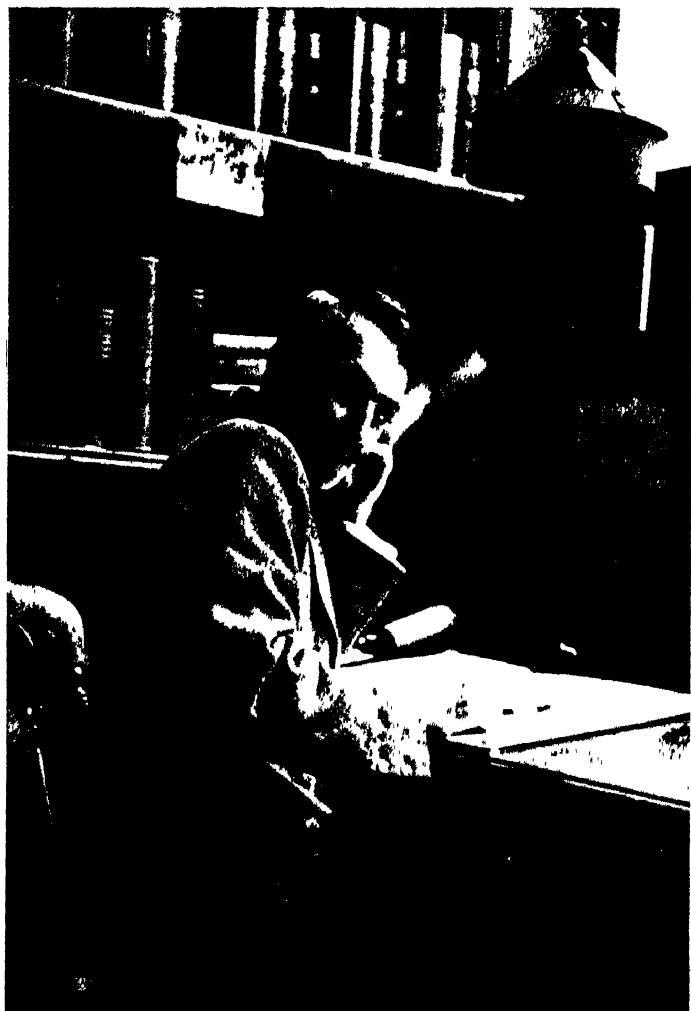
(Old Saying.)

*The Heart, the Soul, the Mind, they are the  
great adventurers.*

(New Saying.)

*So : "Come," said Dr. Johnson, "let us  
take a walk down Fleet Street."*





By W. J. Roberts

## *The Window in Fleet Street*

A WINDOW IN  
FLEET STREET  
BY JAMES MILNE

New York  
HOLBORN HOUSE

1932

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*Dedication : To You, my dear Amy*

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## I. A STREET OF MANY WAYS

*The very human, still Bohemian Eighteen-Nineties, when the last of the writing Victorians were out for a life adventurous, and found it between the romance of the ages and the wonders of the future.*

FLEET STREET in the 'Nineties of last century was a fine adventure for a young Scotsman from the Highland side of the Grampians, trying his luck in London Town.

It still had sights and echoes of the time when Samuel Johnson might well have said to James Boswell, "Come, let us take a walk down Fleet Street." But you will not find the command in the famous "Life," because it was invented by George Augustus Sala as a motto for the old, dead magazine, "Temple Bar." Also the trumpets of a new age, loud and bustling, were at the gates of Fleet Street, shaking them up, as Temple Bar at one end, and King Lud at the other end, had not only been shaken up but shaken out of their ancient places.

There were thus two Fleet Streets for adventure :

one with the glamour of old things and old faces, a mental retrospect and refreshment ; the other with the swing of modern minds and swift advances, a salute to enterprise, personal as well as general. The lovely thing, in a street having two doors, was that you could take either, as opportunity persuaded or impelled, and never, like the spiritual wanderer in Omar Khayyám, feel you came out by the same one as you went in.

It was an easy affair to cross this newspaper Rubicon when the inviting clank of horses' feet was its prevalent and loudest noise. You just launched into the traffic, sure there was some safe way through the "growlers," the hansoms, the private carriages, the buses, the lorries and the carts. You knew you would, like Swinburne's "weariest river," wind somewhere safe to whatever sea you sought, whereas nowadays you take your life in your hand and say, with a witty American Ambassador, "Only a place for the quick or the dead !"

You could hear the bells of Wren's St. Bride's Church when they rang, and people had time, and took it, to stop and listen to them. Even the clank of the great presses, printing off the daily newspapers, had an anthem note, because they did not go so fast, and there were not so many of them needed for smaller circulations. Fleet Street only

invaded the country by passenger train or post, and, as yet, had no thought of competing with local papers within their own areas. "Our London Correspondent," with his "special wire," was the personal link between town and country, and he was to be read with proper awe, as well as for his information.

War correspondents were still figures of romance, and one of my own disappointments was that, coming too late, I never saw a great compatriot, Archibald Forbes. Somehow he had seemed to me the chevalier, without fear or reproach, of the order, and he could write like blazes, as you will discover for yourself if you can lay hands on a little volume, bound in red cloth, which contained his Plevna and other war dispatches. Here was a man who knew both the sword and the pen and who solved the old familiar debating-society question by mingling their mightiness.

Other men who had campaigned with him still walked the Street of Adventure, and when you met them the scent of new battles seemed to be in their nostrils. There was Bennet Burleigh, muscular and driving, who had also soldiered, or there was Fred Villiers, who, with his peaked Captain Kettle beard, and a sense of colour in his clothes, looked the complete war artist. Melton Prior, reddish of

hair, shortish in stature, had sketched many wars, and "Charlie" Williams was just himself, large and rugged, amiable and combative, a good friend in a corner, a valiant enemy when challenged.

It was a fine old brigade of war "Specials" that went clattering from Fleet Street when the bugles blew in some quarter of the earth, and one salutes their memory. Their enterprise, clad in dignity, well represented the note of journalism then, and they themselves illustrated its comradeship and individuality. They not only did things, but, as there was time and room for individuality, they did them in a way which was characteristic of themselves and could be as little mistaken as the chronicles of the Biblical kings and prophets. Surely these prophets and kings were the first and greatest of war correspondents, so it is proper and indeed necessary to cite them.

Both the newspaper day and the newspaper night were longer in Fleet Street in the 'Nineties than they are now. There was plenty to do, and it was done, and well done, but with less hurry and rush, though, by its very nature, a newspaper is a quick-moving creature. Always it should move with orderly ease, like a racehorse going well within his stride, or else there is trouble, and indeed this absence of drama, this presence of sheer ordinariness, is what



*Ready, aye ready! "Charlie" Williams, one of the fine Old Guard of English War Correspondents, who began with William Howard Russell, and included Scottish Archibald Forbes.*

most impresses the stranger visiting Fleet Street. No fuss, no noise, no nerves, and duly the presses down in the deeps where the Fleet River may still murmur, begin to growl out their sheaves of print.

Outwardly the newspaper offices preserve the calm air they had "when we were very young," though architecturally they have changed with the times. A newspaper office is a serious place—especially, of course, the editorial room—and you can hardly make it look gay even on a Lord Mayor's Day. No doubt it gathers into itself the mentality of its calling, and when many buildings are concerned, this air is perhaps even communicated to a street. Nobody who knows and loves Fleet Street could, in any circumstances, mistake it for any place but itself. If it were bodily removed to the African Sahara it would retain its inky smell, its cool indifference to curiosity, and its flair for the latest news.

"Jack the Ripper" had been the great sensation in the late Eighteen-Eighties, and among those who had reported him there lingered tales of his ways, pursuit and no capture. He left on the populace of East London a "gru" such as the Burke and Hare murders cast over Edinburgh, and in Fleet Street a newspaper trail.

Nay, it was a world trail, for years afterwards, in

## AN ECHO OF A TRAGEDY

Chicago, I was taken, one night, to a Whitechapel Club, which the literary and artistic Bohemians had so christened, because it sported an atmosphere of the "horrible and awful," as well as a kindly hospitality. In particular it invited "tall stories" from its members, and then it shouted them down with a weird chorus, of which one verse ran :

*" In the days of old Rameses ; are you on ?  
They told the same thing, they told the same thing  
In the days of old Rameses, the story had paresis—  
Are you on, are you on, are you on ? "*

There never had been such a sustained horror and mystery as "Jack the Ripper" staged in Whitechapel, and out of the endeavour to comprehend the one and to solve the other, there probably sprang something of the keener modern liking for the detective story. Anyhow, "Jack" had become a complete and traditional villain, and for long, any London crime with any resemblance to his would cause a "scare," in head-lines anyhow. The old-time "penny a liner," mostly a resourceful fellow, and a full Bohemian, certainly never had a better subject for his casual labour.

It was casual labour and its bad effects which led to another, different sort of spectre, that engrossed



## A STREET OF MANY WAYS

Fleet Street: the Great London Dock Strike.  
The chronicling of it was the chronicling of London



*"Hammering Away!" An impression, by Sir F. C. Gould, of Mr. John Burns, who was so inspiring a figure in the Great London Dock Strike of 1889, and is still carrying on.*

stirring uneasily, multitudinously, in its life of labour, as it had never stirred before. New democratic leaders leapt into national figures, most clearly

## THE DOCKER'S "TANNER"

Mr. John Burns, whose trumpet voice, short, blue-reefered figure and long-headed diplomacy did much to win the London docker his "tanner." His straw-hat, of the "boater" sort, so long out of fashion, and now only a little returned, was the oriflamme of the strike.

It is a far day, in thought as well as in deed, since thousands of casual workers were marching westward through Fleet Street to the modest cry, "Give the docker his sixpence an hour." And yet, as Fleet Street men would later say with wonder, it took weeks to win the "tanner" from the hard-faced treasuries of London River.

Nobody can have travelled Fleet Street, usefully for himself or others, without feeling how sympathetically it reacts to large public movements. It captures their atmosphere and colour, as well as their meaning in plain fact, and thus it is able to reflect them as they really are. True, it is a question of the best news and the swiftest news, but always the gospel of knowledge is on the wing and sinking into the public ear. It may be a screech, like the wheels of an ancient horse-bus crying for grease, or it may be a dead sound, like the traffic when a "London particular" fell on Fleet Street, only it is there, a message doing its work without halt, day or night.

No doubt it was a bright young fellow on a paper who named the right brand of fog a "London particular," though we do not know him. Sometimes it is the unknown soldier of Fleet Street who most deserves to be buried beside the other one in Westminster Abbey. He is, however, content to contribute his thoughts and his captions to the common lot and pass quickly into the eternal fog. A "London particular," when it still flourished in the 'Nineties, before the smoke nuisance was tackled, was not so ultimate as that, yet it was quite enough.

It came, yellow and yellower, down Ludgate Hill, like the waves of a muddy sea, or it swam into Fleet Street from the Griffin end. Either way, it ate up what sight there had been by daylight, gas-light, or that then rising star, electric light. A great, clammy, smoky hand grasped everything, and stuck its fingers into your nostrils and your eyes, making them smart. You wheezed and coughed and spluttered and wondered how on earth you were to get home, for a glimpse through a window showed you a sort of "Dead March in Saul" down in Fleet Street.

Fires in braziers were lit by the authorities at vital points of traffic, and dwindling vehicles and shadowy walkers steered by those glimmers and by

walls and railings. Oh, the real "London particular" could be as thorough as this, though you must not say it to a younger son and expect to be believed. A "stinking, kippered fog" was the horse-busman's name for it when he found himself on the pavement, and didn't know just what pavement it was. Well, the 3.15 a.m., late worker's train, was booked to run as usual from Ludgate Hill, round South London to Victoria, and you could grope your way to it on the chance of getting home some time or other.

Why is it that a street, which is more than that because a special community, makes the most lasting impression when it is either drab or sunshiny? Probably for the same reason that one most remembers a single human face in tears or in laughter. Fleet Street, with the sun rising behind St. Paul's, has ever been a glorious greeting in the morning. Fleet Street, towards evening, with the westerly sun pouring into it like molten gold, has been a benison to its weary and worn people. Change is a chariot of many and succeeding wheels, but a personality which gets the creative and re-creative warmth of the sun lives on, changing yet changeless; and surely that is the Street of Adventure.

Oliver Goldsmith would not have known it in the 'Nineties, if he had risen from his silent grave in the

Temple, and walked along to St. Paul's Churchyard. He was, you see, accustomed to do that in life, for John Newbery, the father of the English Christmas book, had a little shop near St. Paul's, and Goldsmith wrote "Goody Two-Shoes" and other things for him.

Nor would he know Fleet Street as it looks to-day, soaring towards the sky in the newest parts, a modern Jacob's Ladder for the newspaper man to reach the heaven of his desires. But was "Goldy," though only in a nursery rhyme, not expressing the eternal hope of every comer into Fleet Street when he wrote of the little folk :

*"Who from a State of Rags and Caire  
And having Shoes but half a Paire,  
Their Fortune and their Fame would fix  
And Gallop in a Coach and six."*

For Fleet Street, however it may have changed to the outward eye, is always the same in spirit and in the characteristics we associate with writing and printing for the people. Its mentality and its soul remain, this age, or that age, what they must be, since only thus could they go on, an elixir of our national life. Once in a while you meet the sign of it all in an unforgettable picture, staged by chance,

as chance only stages things in a street where unrobed and unhooded men, and frocked but never frivolous women, are the instruments of light which, centuries ago, the White Friars were on one side of the Thames, as it bends towards St. Paul's Hill, and the Black Friars were on the other side.

Dull, narrow, Whitefriars Street on an afternoon of yester year ; several figures come sailing down abreast, in eager talk : Cunninghame Grahame, who might have been born a Scottish Royal Stuart or a Spanish Conquistador ; Henry Nevinson, a knight-templar of heroic and far-flung causes ; and Louis Austin, as elegant and silken of body as of mind and spirit ; three of the most picturesque men in London, all fine writers. Dumas's Three Musketeers, ever so gallant and good to the eye, as also to the imagination ; and of course they are for Hanging Sword Alley and its named romance.

It is only a small by-way of the precinct of Whitefriars, but with its sword-width of pavement and walls, what ancient makers of steel blades does it not suggest, aye, and users of them, for here a man could slay a rival in the window opposite, or pink him in a duel fought, with seconds, down below. Perhaps Mr. J. L. Garvin felt the lure of Hanging Sword Alley when he planted his editorial chair in Tudor Street, for there it is beside him.

## A STREET OF MANY WAYS

But our other musketeers of Fleet Street turn into a hole for a door, halfway along Whitefriars Street, on the left-hand side. It leads darkly, mysteriously to an editorial office, where a band of brothers made the "Daily Chronicle" a great paper and a great power in the land. It was a brave corner in this Inky Way, which is also an Appian Way, and from there, if you are willing, we shall travel down the years, in hope and faith, in adventure and observation, and perhaps we may sometimes arrive.

## II. THE SOUTHERN ROAD

*Which, said mocking Dr. Johnson, is the noblest prospect a Scotsman can behold; with halts and experiences by the way, and a "close-up" of the famous Maybrick Case and its tragic heroine.*

THERE is always a rosy spark to light the beginning of a life's pilgrimage, or there should be, for the road itself is unsure, and the end of it unknown. A chance, wayward trifle may produce this spark and, by what follows, light the long trail, and that thought recalls one's first, remote dip into the sea of ink which floats Fleet Street.

Take the most beautiful village in the Scottish Highlands, no other than Aboyne, where the "Cock o' the North" roosts; the swift, silver Dee coming down past it from Royal Balmoral; and the westering, blue-vaulted hills, crowned by "dark Lochnagar," on which Byron "roved a young Highlander." Suppose a keen and kilted little angler whose small "bum-bee" trout fly had been seized by a stupid, blundering great salmon. One wallop



of his surly bulk in the water and all the tackle was gone, and nearly the rod itself, and there was no more fishing that morning. But, hullo ! Was there not in this the making of a gallant yarn about a sea-serpent in the Dee, the posting of it to an Aberdeen paper, and the glorious appearance of it in print a day or two later.

What a wizard, heady thing is the first spot of printer's ink, not to speak of the seven and sixpence which, at a penny a line, another revelation, that story brought to its marvelling author. He did not quite know why it had, in the paper, been headed "A Krakan in the Dee" instead of his own "A Sea-Serpent in the Dee," but that did not disqualify his bliss. It was shared, the precious thing, by a wonderful mother, whose tender heart and shining Highland soul were as lamps to larger ventures ; shared also by two of those old-time parochial schoolmasters who educated the youth of Scotland as it has never been educated since, and sent it to ancient universities and then, peradventure, to Fleet Street, in London Town, and the discovery of—Hanging Sword Alley !

But this was never in a single passage, and so there was an apprenticeship few months to news-gathering in that flat, dour half of Aberdeenshire which throws itself into the grey North Sea, at the



*Hanging Sword Alley, a Whitefriars court which offers a romantic salute to every new venturer in Fleet Street, and, to old habitants, swords for two and coffee for one.*

Bullers o' Buchan, immortalised, if not well described, by James Boswell in his biography of Dr. Johnson. No wonder if Samuel, of Gough Court, Fleet Street, London, who loved comfort, felt it cold there, for nothing stands between it and the North Pole, and its rocks, rising sheer from deep, tumultuous waters, have, in stormy weather, ever been a graveyard for ships.

Then Aberdeen, with its granite houses, sparkling like stars on a moonlight night, true token of the shy warmth within, its crunching, cobbled streets and its renown in learning, in theology, in Scots humorous stories and in good citizenship. A tramp to it, sore-footed but happy, from a village twenty-five miles away, on a Sabbath Day, was an unknown introduction to the later, familiar "scoops" of Fleet Street.

A noble and amiable lord, the husband of a noble and amiable lady, both considerable figures in public life, had made a speech late on a Saturday evening. Nobody else there to let the world know what he said and no way, on the morrow, of getting what he said to the Aberdeen paper. Sit up late, to write out the chronicle; a good sleep in the caller air; and in the morning an idea: why not walk—yes, walk—the twenty-five miles to Aberdeen? It would get his lordship into print on the

Monday morning, instead of the Tuesday, and the opposition organ wouldn't have a word of him.

Splendid ; and anyhow, it was "Go west, young man!" as Abraham Lincoln, Horace Greeley, or both of them, advised Americans to do, and the Highland Aberdeenshire, poor but beautiful like a Highland lass, was my native sweetheart, with its alluring Strathdee, of boyhood, and its kindly Strathdon of childhood and their chorus to each other:

*"A'e mile o' Don's worth twa o' Dee,  
Except it be for fish an' tree."*

A well-breakfasted, hopeful start on this long tramp, never a "lift" of any kind along the road, for the Sabbath Day was still the Sabbath Day in Scotland ; and then, in the evening, a tired climb up a newspaper office stair near Aberdeen's Marischal College. A mighty sub-editor, whom it was usually *lèse-majesté* to approach, though his hidden heart was really kind, positively beamed about it all, and a line in Monday morning's contents-bill seemed like a blazon of fame, not yet come, perhaps, but, for all that, dazzling.

Ah ! and to think how, when, in the goodness of time, we perhaps do something, it is worth just nothing to ourselves, so much Dead Sea fruit, unflavoured in the stress of winning. No doubt one

of the high secrets of life is to keep the oil of youth burning in the lamp of age, but how many of us succeed in doing that ?

Anyhow, there was William Alexander, lovable man, wise editor, author of "Johnnie Gibb of Gushetneuk," which founded the Scottish modern "kail-yard school," saving that fore-running novel, John Galt's "Parish." See Dr. Alexander, with his cripple leg, begotten of an accident when he was still his father's farmer boy, and his stout stick, walk down stately, noisy Union Street of a morning, and you saw Aberdeen take off its hat in homage to him, and it is indeed true fame to be a prophet in your own country. How encouraging, how guiding, how fatherly he was to likely young spirits who came within his ken, and so say all of us, far scattered and few though we now are.

Even when he liked you, he let you, without a touch of hurt fatherliness, take the Southern Road. Seek the sun ! So it was a natural road, and it called, firstly, as far as Edinburgh and all that "mine own romantic town" of Walter Scott's affection is to a real and leal Scotsman. What does it not stand for ?

The singing traditions and glamorous history of an ancient capital ; laughing, sad Mary Stuart and preaching John Knox ; grey, kindly Holyrood, and

the precipitous, picturesque High Street ; St. Giles's Cathedral, where Jenny Geddes flung a stool that missed its man but made history ; the immobile yet winged Castle on the eternal rock ; flaunting Princes Street beyond the garden valley ; the Calton Hill, with its Greek columns left unfinished, as if Scots Presbyterianism feared that a voice might some day, from one of them, call forth an alien religion ! Edinburgh meant, too, a larger because a national journalism, and it meant personally the famous university and its classes, especially David Masson and his chair of English literature.

Somebody must have said, thoughtlessly, of course, that a Scotsman cannot speak English, to which there would be the easy reply, " May be aye, may be no, but he can teach it ! " There can never have been a more formidable professor of the English language and its literature than David Masson, and one treasures and re-reads, though the shorthand script is sometimes difficult, a volume in which his lectures were chronicled. He came from Aberdeen, and he always struck you as, inwardly, a sweet William Alexander and as, outwardly, a rugged Thomas Carlyle. What could be better than a " gentle Elia " bound in a lion's skin ? Aye, and David Masson could roar to effect.

An American, having the name of Donnelly, and an Irish mental twist, was then raging and tearing about Shakespeare as being really Bacon. Masson took him in hand, and when he had finished hammering him on his class-room desk, there wasn't much Donnelly left and no Bacon. His grey hair leapt with the vigour of his eloquence, his eyes flashed scorn as well as scholarship and his Victorian beard shook destruction at this impious Yankee, burgling the sacred temple of English letters. We, like the Tuscan ranks in Macaulay's "Lays," could "scarce forbear a cheer," and sometimes we did cheer.

There were still clear echoes of Robert Louis Stevenson at Edinburgh University, and that led to the idea of writing something about him, perhaps a small volume of memories gathered from those who had known him familiarly in the flesh and, as far as they could, in the spirit. His father's old clerk was supposed to be the best depository of this sort of information, and he was visited, with discouraging results.

Louis ! Well, he was a Stevenson, but he hadn't built any of the Northern Lights, and so what was there to be said about him ? He, himself, was writing in far Samoa then, and wasn't that enough, and, in any case, his father's factotum didn't remember anything specially interesting about Louis, though

he had known him as child, boy and young man—oh, aye !

Therefore, that idea died at the first shot, or rather for want of any ammunition, because Charles Baxter, Writer to the Signet, an early crony and life-long friend of "R. L. S.," was happened on later. "During his whole life," said he of Stevenson, "he had an extraordinary amount of vivacity, simply no end of spirits. Once, in giving them fling, he was hauled before the Edinburgh magistrates for snow-balling in the streets, but he came out of the scrape without harm. He was a picturesque personality as a student, for he wore his hair long, was strong in velveteen jackets and sometimes came forth in a loose sort of Spanish cloak." Even so, added this good friend, he had none of the merely literary person's "pale cast of thought" in his character and never developed it, "R. L. S." being a real man.

Fortunately, there were other things, besides unwanted biographies, to write in Edinburgh, on two guineas a week. Not very much stipend that, perhaps, but it was all right if you had a shilling over on the Sabbath Day, to put in the plate at St. Giles's. Would you have put it all there, if the classic offering in a Scots kirk is a penny? Not, though, in St. Giles's, because it is a cathedral and different.

You might have discussed all that humorously



enough with John Stuart Blackie, if you had waylaid him in Princes Street by touching the hem of his shepherd tartan shawl. He had been Professor of Greek in Edinburgh University, and he might have been an ancient Greek if his views had not been so modern and liberal as a patriotic Scot, most dear to his countrymen. Almost he was a link with the Edinburgh of Byron's "Scotch Reviewers," in spirit, anyhow, and the influence of his poetic, picturesque character was great in all the "north countree."

By and by there came a "call" to Birmingham, though the use and significance of the word is rather confined to gentlemen of the cloth, not of the press. This meant taking the road which Johnson declared the noblest view a Scotsman could have, the road to England. But if you cross the Border at night you do not get the view, and so need not discuss a saying which Boswell probably put into Johnson's mouth, or, if he did not do that, expressed in a better way than his master would have done. Like most Scotsmen, "Bozzy" loved to "pull the leg" of his own country, and if it be a doubtful patriotism, it is a weakness which has added to the world's treasury of humour.

Birmingham on a cold spring morning was strange and forbidding enough to send a Scotsman back over the Border, but it grew kindlier, friendlier, in

the muddily, rough way, characteristic of the Midlands. Very self-contained, very self-reliant, very Joseph Chamberlain it was, with Edgbaston as a beauty corner, but it was not an anchorage for ever. A last page of ink spilt in it was around the recurring interest in the still mysterious tragedy of Prince Rudolph, heir to the Austria-Hungarian throne, and his beautiful seventeen-year-old lady love, Baroness Marie Vetsera. It will continue to intrigue the world, and a psychological "leader" on it was a new exploit in writing to a young hand, and therefore a personal recollection.

Sometimes, for the mills of God come round in a circle, the individual is permitted to overtake his earlier self as a journalist, and long years later, a holiday in Austria did this for me with the Prince Rudolph affair. At Schönbrunn, the former Imperial palace near Vienna, you may, under the Republic, visit the apartments in which Rudolph and his bride, a daughter of King Leopold of the Belgians, were lodged after their marriage. Dark, dreary rooms, looking out on a dull landscape, and everything within formal and heavy. Especially, coffin-like, wooden beds standing side by side, with a correctitude and severity calculated not only to chill romance but to murder it.

No mirth, no sentiment, no poetry in these royal

chambers ; only the drab dead weight of convention and ceremony, arch-enemies of happy married love. Small wonder if light died out of any love there had been between the handsome, temperamental Hapsburg and his Belgian bride, and that may have started him on his will-o'-the-wisp nocturnes. Speculation ; and among the charming, frankly spoken Viennese one found no sure catechism as to how the fatality happened in the Prince's shooting-lodge at Mayerling. Many English people have been in the same mind towards another affair which stirred the world about the Eighteen-Nineties, the Maybrick Case.

Newspaper adventure in Fleet Street takes no account of age or experience, but just calls you to do something if you are handy, not quite impossible, and there's nobody else. Thus the trial, at Liverpool, of Florence Maybrick, on the charge of poisoning her husband with arsenic, fell among the early thrills of "our Special Correspondent."

She, in the dock, a pale-faced, slender woman of education, breeding and still good looks, dressed in black. Sir James Fitzjames Stephen on the bench, a once brilliant mind in an almost rustic body, and the time not long before he retired. Sir Charles Russell, a great advocate and looking grave, because



*Mrs. Florence Maybrick pleading for her life before Mr. Justice Stephen in the most sensational murder trial of our time. It took place at the Liverpool Assizes in 1889, and this drawing is from a sketch made in court for "The Graphic."*

he was defending the life of a woman in whose innocence he sincerely believed, then and afterwards. A rather ordinary-looking Lancashire jury, unthankful, like all juries, at being there, and the Liverpool populace crowding outside.

“Guilty !” Nobody who hears that deliverance from a jury trying the capital charge, can ever forget the knell in it, as of a death-bell. It means the judge’s black cap, mourning the condemned, a scaffold death by hanging, and an ordeal to go through for everybody present. When Mrs. Maybrick heard it she gave a cry like a stricken animal and fell against the side of the dock. That incident was as the last rack in her trial, and it hurt an onlooker almost as much as hearing the sentence and its epilogue, “May God have mercy on your soul.”

Afterwards the Judge’s carriage was stoned, as it drove him to his lodgings, and soon there arose a tremendous national hubbub. The death sentence was eventually commuted to penal servitude for life ; which meant Mrs. Maybrick’s release many years ago now, when she had grown middle-aged. Queen Victoria, as one of her letters tells us, regretted that “so wicked a woman should escape by a mere legal quibble,” and added in her hardest vein of comment, “The law is not a moral profession

... her sentence must never be further commuted." Decisive, was it not ?

The Maybrick Case, with its extraordinary reaction on public feeling and opinion in England, and also in Mrs. Maybrick's native country, America, is now history. Nevertheless, for the "human document" in it, a "still, small voice" may perhaps record a personal postscript. One means one's on-the-spot impression and judgment of the whole affair ; the woman in it, and the verdict. It was, somehow, that she was innocent of taking her husband's entangled life, certainly no actual murderess, and that she had been caught in the meshes of circumstantial evidence, which, in itself, was incomplete. She did not comport herself like a guilty woman, but her insistence on making a statement against the advice of Sir Charles Russell, and her intrigue with a lover, told definitely against her in the minds of a perhaps not very penetrating jury.

Assuredly most of us who watched and wrote of her day by day, and heard and saw everything, would have said "Not guilty," or, at the least, if it had been a Scots trial, "Not proven." Even the much-stressed line, in one of her letters, about her husband being "sick unto death," carried no sense of guilt, because it was only an echo, by an educated woman,

## THE SOUTHERN ROAD

of a Biblical expression. Lastly, you may take all this view of an eye-witness, intuition and feeling more than the precise assessment of evidence, as an example of the inner gleam on public and personal events which one gets through the windows of Fleet Street.

### III. THE DREAM AND THE BUSINESS

*Newly divulged stories about Benjamin Disraeli's death, his historic Suez Canal deal and the Parnell Commission ; with their cross-lights on the natural history of that strange, uncanny creature, " The Scoop."*

FLEET STREET is not a place where the sun always shines, where the wind never blows, and where there is constant music. That would be a heaven on earth, and as fairies are not good enough for one, and too good for the other, so people in Fleet Street encounter uncertainties. But the calling is a splendid venture, and however the election may go, no born newspaper man would wish to be anything else.

It is, like most other things, first and always an affair of personality, and whether yours is the right kind of personality or not. You must be able to see visions and dream dreams, because that means a flair for the elements of news, the sighting or scenting of it before it is definite enough for anyone else to grasp. But the visioning and the dreaming must fructify in facts which, in the words of Robert Burns,



“winna ding and daurna’ be disputed.” His famous “chiel,” taking notes and printing them, has to be no mere clerk in orders, but a fellow of quick imagination and quick execution, else he will be late in Fleet Street, even as the ’Nineties ruled it.

Has there, though, ever been a good journalist or author who did not put off writing his article, or his essay, until the last moment and then go desperately at it. If it has a man’s mind and spirit and body all in it, it is a crucifixion, and he leaves the cross, limp and weary. He is sacrificing himself that others may read, making a Roman holiday on a better model, and as an eminent practitioner said to me not long ago, “Heaven only knows why we go on doing it.”

No doubt there is the fortunate man who just “flings things off,” but he is up against the damning wisdom, “Easy writing makes hard reading.” The most brilliant work in Fleet Street is often done at hurricane speed, but not in a hurry, because it has been thought out. The human machine behind it has had all the pains of labour, just as these are behind everything that is created, from a poem to a baby. For the rest, as somebody has sung :

*“ Upon this earthly scene  
We have our ups and downs, of course,  
And the twiddly bits in between.”*

Happily, perhaps, the daily round of Fleet Street does not encourage reasons why, but it has its intriguing and revealing confidences. These mostly take the form of personal experiences among the brotherhood, and they can be both dramatic and enlightening, like one told me by an old London news-gatherer about Beaconsfield's death.

He had chronicled his doings when he was, as his biographers say, the "strange and impressive figure that you might meet, any day in the late 'Seventies, during the session, sauntering slowly on Rowton's arm down Whitehall. A frame once large and powerful, now shrunken and obviously in physical decay, but preserving a conscious dignity and, whenever aware of observation, regaining with effort an erect attitude." Now he lay dying in Curzon Street, many columns of type were ready in Fleet Street to print his life-story, and it was only a question of who should be first with the announcement of his death.

My ancient friend, a most practised hand in such undertakings, was delegated by his particular news-agency to see that it should be first, and he took his measures. There were no telephones in those timid but picturesque days, and the telegraph did not apply to a case of urgency in London. So he

rented a furnished room in Curzon Street, opposite "Dizzy's" house, after making certain soundings there during his calls for the morning and evening bulletins.

When the end got very close he himself, or a lieutenant not less trusty, kept constant watch, from the hired room, on the windows opposite. This, until in the fullness of death, a dignified, solemn figure in uniform appeared at one of them, wiping his eyes with a red silk handkerchief! By such a sign our mercury-in-waiting knew that Beaconsfield was no more, and he thereupon took a swift carriage, also in waiting, to his office with the historic news. Meanwhile the same, dignified, solemn figure, no longer red-handkerchiefed, slowly drew down the blinds of Beaconsfield's house, in general token that a prince and a king had fallen in Israel. "I'd rather live," he had murmured with a failing voice, "but I'm not afraid to die."

A "scoop," meaning the exclusive capture and publication of an extraordinary piece of news, is not nearly so new as this name, by which it now goes in Fleet Street. Beaconsfield himself unconsciously gave the clue for one when, casually and wilily, he ordered a special train so as to emphasise his views at the Berlin Conference, by threatening to leave it. Peel was the hero of another around

the repeal of the Corn Laws, and there was an echo of it and a fashionable lady in one of George Meredith's novels. Years later he learned that she had nothing to do with the making known of Peel's conversion, and he said so with a gallantry characteristic of the Rupert of Victorian novelists.

An anthology of Fleet Street "scoops," if it could be made, with due attestations and explanations, would really be a direct commentary on English history. As again, the letting out of the news of Gladstone's conversion to Home Rule, in a "kite" flown to prepare the way, and of his final retirement from politics, favourably attributed to an over-hearing butler at a dinner party, though authoritative history sayeth not. But, in hands less patriotic than those into which it fell, a hasty word about the affair of Beaconsfield and the Suez Canal shares might have made a "scoop" of surpassing significance and consequences.

The glittering tale has often been told, though not, may be, just as I heard it, more than once, from a beloved friend, Mr. A. J. Wilson, the knight, without fear or reproach, of City Editors. His richness of mind and beauty of character are a treasured memory, alike in the writing circles of Fleet Street, to which he contributed with

the uplift of his Scots hills and the clarity of French prose ; and in the bank parlours of the City of London, which entrusted their secrets to his advice and thought it an honour to themselves.

He always gave another famous journalist, Frederick Greenwood, the initial credit for "Dizzy's" consummate stroke, but that is not the point here. The point is that Greenwood, though an active editor, never thought of even hinting that the Khedive of Egypt was selling his shares in the Suez Canal, that Beaconsfield and Derby were buying them, and that this meant not merely a transaction out of which the Stock Exchange, if it knew, could make fortunes, but that it gave us the ultimate control of the Suez Canal. A few other journalists came to share the secret and the silence, and Wilson knew for three critical days, while the deal was going through. When, afterwards, a big London stockbroker said chaffingly to him, "If you had only given me a wink, how wealthy we might both be," he just answered, "Of course not."

One wonders if a state secret could be as well kept to-day, when there are far more people "in the know" and the pursuit of news of all sorts is so terribly eager. Definite confidences are never

broken in Fleet Street, the most patriotic street in the Empire, but a whisper may innocently enough pass into a public report. Oftener than not, indeed, "scoops" and "beats," or whatever you like to call them, are in the nature of chance happenings, though they can be the fruit of alertness, forethought, enterprise and organisation.

Of old, they and their psychology would neither have been cared for nor understood by the general reader. To-day his curiosity for knowledge is universal, and, collectively he has millions invested in newspaper properties, which return him a handsome interest, thank you! So "scoops" and "beats," having something to do with newspaper circulations and prosperity, are not unknown terms outside Fleet Street, their natural and parental home. Aforetime, also, a journal having alone given the world a slice of high information, said no more about it. It simply cast its special news upon the waters of Fleet Street, as the "Daily Telegraph" did its historic interview with Kaiser Wilhelm II, and proudly let other papers copy and acknowledge, as sometimes they had to do with wry faces.

We have changed all that, for ill or well, and when any daily, with certain modest exceptions dear to our heart, gets a "scoop," the welkin rings

with it for days. Perhaps Mr. Humbert Wolfe was thinking of that when he wrote :

*" You cannot hope  
To bribe or twist,  
Thank God, the  
British journalist.*

*" But seeing what  
The man will do  
Unbribed, there's  
No occasion to."*

A pretty humour, but the plain, general reader with something invested in Fleet Street, or buying his life insurance with his paper every morning, says, of a "scoop," "Our paper, my dear ; going strong, to do that." It all makes for education about Fleet Street, where every man worthy of his salt, whether taken in Scots porridge or not, hopes, one fine day, to have his particular victory, precisely as a soldier, Marshal Foch being an example, hopes to have his battle, or once did, for the spirit of peace now happily has most victories.

Out of one's own experience it is possible to contribute a little thrill of this sort, and moreover it illustrates the chance, the accidental element in

“scoops.” It belongs to that colourful event of the 'Nineties, the Parnell Commission, and so to primeval times, may be, in the eyes of “bright young people,” who date history by the Great War and its relevance and importance by the years in which



*Original sketches, by the late Sir Frank Lockwood, Q.C., of Richard Pigott, the forger of the historic Parnell Letters, and of Le Caron, the notorious Anti-Irish spy.*

they themselves were born. Therefore it is well to say that “Parnellism and Crime” was an indictment by “The Times” of the Irish leader and his party, and that they demanded a special commission before which they could vindicate themselves.

Sir Charles Russell, still that, and not Lord Russell of Killowen, as he became, had, in his eager advocacy for Parnell, a few tiffs with Sir James



Hannen, the dignified, urbane President of the Commission. Once, in fact, over some point of procedure or evidence, he lost his generous Irish temper, took a furious pinch of snuff, flourished his red handkerchief and walked out of court, deeply hurt.

Between him and Sir James there was a sincere liking, both being men of large character and hearts, and each of them felt the distress of the incident. They silently made this apparent, and by and by came Russell's great, closing address, because he was a full, eloquent orator, on behalf of Parnell. When he sat down, with tears of emotion in his eyes, for he was an Irishman pleading his country's cause, as well as an advocate, Sir James Hannen sent him a written word of congratulation from the bench : "A great speech, worthy of a great occasion."

It flowered and flamed in all the papers next morning, and there was a deuce of a row as to how it got there. A personal word, a purely private scrap of paper, a gracious gesture, especially in view of the tiffs there had been ! And there it was, blazoned to the public, who might see in it an almost improper communication from a presiding judge to a leading counsel, in a most controversial political trial. Its every phase had been governed

by punctilious correctness, and no wonder Sir James Hannen was angry and demanded explanations. Everybody, official and legal, was quite ignorant, quite innocent, and so nobody, from ushers to big wigs, could give the least explanation. Well, here, after all those years, when no harm can be done, and, one hopes, none encountered, is what happened.

Sir Charles Russell's wife and daughter were present to hear his address for Parnell, and they sat in a pew sort of seat, with, immediately behind them, three of the newspaper men reporting the Commission. Nearest the well of the court was a young fellow with brownish-black hair and lots of it, a face as fresh as Scots heather, an eye made observant among mountain ranges, and an ear trained there to be clear of hearing. He also had a flying pencil, because the world waited to read the eloquent Russell's moving peroration.

Presently, from beside Sir Charles, in the Q.C.'s seats, because Queen Victoria then reigned, there came Sir Frank Lockwood, also a counsel for Parnell. He was prompted by his kind heart to congratulate Lady Russell and her daughter on the speech, and to tell them of Sir James Hannen's graceful message. He rested his shapely, artistic hand, token of the amateur cartoonist as well as the

successful lawyer, where the young Scots reporter was writing. Then he leant over to the ladies, said a few nice words for himself, and whispered the Presidential message : " A great speech, worthy of a great occasion."

That little happening illustrates what should always be remembered about Fleet Street, that the men and women who work its daily miracle of recording and reflecting the life of the world, are anonymous and unknown, not just a few with familiar names. Here is a grand army which achieves in silence, for it is an achievement that, amid hurry and bustle, such a wonderfully accurate review of human activity should be served up with our English breakfast every morning.

#### IV. WHAT EVERYBODY DOESN'T KNOW

*The news that lies behind the news, circulating silently, as do tidings in the Arabian Desert ; and that leads to the love story of Charles Stewart Parnell and " Kitty " O'Shea ; and to austere Cardinal Manning.*

ONE of the constant charms of a journalistic life to the student of human nature—and, consciously or unconsciously, we are all that—is the knowledge of why and how events happen, not merely what happens. It is the outcome, the consequence of things, you get on your breakfast-table in the morning, or before dinner in the evening. But the Fleet Street man, if he is living and working in its inner whispering gallery, hears the causes, the origins, the whole story.

This holds even to-day, when the papers are much franker about personal affairs than they were in the 'Nineties, though not more frank than they were in the 'Nineties of the eighteenth century, and not so coarse. A journalist's wife must, until she gets to know the way of his world, be surprised by his commentaries on the news, for she hears all that isn't

printed. If she were unbelieving, which, happily, she rarely is, she might say with Job :

*"No doubt but ye are the people,  
And wisdom shall die with you."*

Often what the world hears not is more interesting than what is printed, because it goes down to the bedrock of "Why" and "How." Skeletons of the cupboard, like jealousies, rivalries, loves and hates, get known in Fleet Street, which behaves like a gentleman, and only talks about them to itself. Moreover, the law of libel lies heavily on too much truth, when it is not good that it should be proclaimed on the housetops.

There are few of us who could not tales unfold within twelve hours of the time we have heard them and consigned them to the secret-chamber of the mind. You do that, just as you throw an impossible page of manuscript into the waste-paper basket, or as a healthy-minded person forgets the latest stupid, naughty story. The value of such a story in Fleet Street is, as elsewhere, only oral, and newspaper men are practical as well as puritanical. Oh, yes, theirs is a calling almost monkish, in that long, uncertain, strenuous hours largely cut them out of ordinary social life and what goes with it. This

tends to that mixture of indifference and austerity which marks the solitary, a frequent personality in Fleet Street.

Outsiders have ideas about the newspaper offices there which are very remote from what actually takes place within them, especially their mental, spiritual and even moral atmosphere. Journalists are still, to the mob, suspected Bohemians, if not, possibly, vagabonds, as actors once were in the eyes of authority ; anyhow, they live behind darkened windows. There is a like innocence about the making and the psychology of a newspaper, and no wonder, for it would never, in the saying of an American journalist, occur to an outsider that " When a dog bites a man, that is not news, because it happens so often. But if a man bites a dog, that is news."

Unknowing people, being also unthinking people, have a habit of declaring, " Wouldn't the papers just like to publish that ? " Not at all, because what any journal contains is a selection of the whole news of the day, made, more or less, from its own standpoint, which is almost personal, as every paper that counts has a personality as well as a public.

" But," comes the observation, " how do you manage to fill your columns every day if you refuse these things ? " Well, selection means leaving out

the "impossibles," the scandalous, the dull and the unimportant, a judicious acceptance and a stiff rejection ; and, even so, enough stuff comes into an office every day to fill the paper several times over. It comes from near and far, a street accident round the corner, a pronouncement by the Grand Lama of Tibet, or anything else in this wonderful universe.

For the great news, the occurrence that may change history, or the happening that may be a high human drama, there is always a lively contest, and a certain London evening newspaper won a race like that when, in the 'Nineties, it announced the Parnell-O'Shea Divorce Case. Everybody in political and social circles knew of the love affair between Charles Stewart Parnell and "Kitty" O'Shea, the wife of Captain O'Shea, whom "The Chief," as Irish Nationalists saluted him, had once made an M.P. without heeding their protests.

Would O'Shea bring an action for divorce, and if so when, for that would mean a bombshell in the politics of the time ? Until an action was actually entered there could be no publicity, as Fleet Street is thoughtful of feelings, as well as careful of the law of libel and that elastic trouble, contempt of court. Moreover, the ethic of the Victorian social and political world, "Let sleeping dogs lie," ran

AN "UNCROWNED KING"

in Fleet Street as elsewhere, so there was little done with scandal until it came into the open.

There is a mirthful if, perhaps, extreme illustration of this, in the Victorian memories of the witty and wise author of "Dodo," itself an explosive



*A study, from a photograph, of the thin, severe face and the striking, masterful head of Charles Stewart Parnell, as he was when he led the Irish Party in the House of Commons and was the "uncrowned king" of Ireland.*

Victorian "best-seller." "A man," you may read in his looking backward, 'As We Were,' "could be a sincere and devout Christian and yet be keeping a mistress . . . a certain notable Oxford professor of strict Tractarian views, who kept a mistress in the town, learned casually from her that she had never been confirmed. He was very much upset



by this and persuaded her to receive instruction and repair this shocking omission. That made him quite happy and their relationship was renewed with no cloud to mar its happiness." An idyll, in its sort, you perceive, and at least it illustrates a Victorian code which held silence to be golden, even if it cloaked a love affair.

One morning a journalist brought news to his office, that Captain O'Shea had moved the law, that proceedings against his wife and the Irish leader were begun. No doubt he got this dramatic information from some chance source, and no doubt it was true. But, in such a business, confirmation is necessary before publication, and here it must be on the best possible authority—that of Captain O'Shea himself. He was known to be in London, living in Victoria Street, and thither went the finder of the secret, with a younger colleague to bear him company. It was not an easy job, and it was desirable the chief ambassador should have a witness of events.

A ring at the door of Captain O'Shea's flat, the coming, pit-a-pat, of a servant and to an enquiry, the reply, "Oh, he's still in bed," for it was early. But the business was very important, even urgent, and would she kindly tell him that. She did, then returned, said to come in, and showed the way to

his room, where, a well-figured, ripely handsome, not unjolly Irishman, he was dressing.

He apologised for this, courteously asked, "But why your visit, and so soon on a grey London morning?" and was told. "Is it true that you have begun an action for divorce against Mrs. O'Shea and named Mr. Parnell co-respondent?" He was neither hostile nor communicative, but surprised, and it was easy to see how matters stood before he quietly said in effect, "If you know what I have done, then you know." The ambassador-in-chief, who never failed in two important Fleet Street equipments, tact and its quick expression in action, said, "Thank you," and within a few hours London knew what was coming.

It is a charge of history against the Victorian conscience, even as late as the 'Nineties, that it could be "sniffy" as well as indignant in sex matters. Who is to draw the line between curiosity for human frailty and anger that it should happen, as it has, from Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden, all down the ages? Anyhow, there were probably late Victorians who, when they heard of the moral indictment of Parnell, said to themselves, in a passage, which that eloquent, picturesque divine, Dr. Joseph Parker, flung from his first London pulpit: "I once heard of a man who was too wicked for hell,

so the devil sent him out a teaspoonful of brimstone, to set up on his own account." Fortunately, a teaspoonful could not have lasted long, but O'Shea v. O'Shea, with Charles Stewart Parnell co-respondent, did last, in fact, and in effect.

Another scene which I well remember in this great drama of Ireland's destiny, staged itself one cold evening, amid the dank greyness of Euston Station when it was lighted by gas. The Holyhead Express, with steam hissing from the engine, as if it panted to catch the Irish boat, was drawn up at one platform, on which many people with conversing brogues had gathered. They came to see the deposed Irish leader, who, after the divorce and its Parliamentary travail for him, was going to Ireland to seek a fresh mandate of confidence.

Presently he arrived, tall, loose in build, bearded, wearing a heavy, brownish ulster above a rough tweed suit. He lifted his black bowler hat once or twice, as he passed through the cheering crowd to a compartment that had been reserved for him. Before sitting down, he folded a rug over his knees, a familiar act in the days of yore, when trains were unwarmed, and most deliberate on his part, as if he were thinking. But always, though seeming a man of thought, he also seemed to make up his mind by signs and tokens and realities, rather than by

reasoning, and certainly he had an uncanny element in his personality, revealed and unrevealed.

His pallid face was drawn and worn, and his eyes looked more deeply sunk than ever, under their beetling eyebrows. They were strange eyes, small, icy, even hard, but with the crouching fire of an eagle, and you looked at them again and again because they fascinated. They told little, for they were searching, not communicative, but somehow you saw them as eyes which, for all their cold reticence, could flame with passion or leap with temper. No man was ever so un-Irish or, at least, so un-Celtic in aspect and in temperament as Parnell. Possibly that was why he made his Irish Party so iron-like nationally, and so purposeful and effective as a Parliamentary weapon.

By nature he had not more words than Oliver Cromwell, when he said, "Remove that bauble!" These words were often halting and scattered, as if there were dynamic forces within whose full feeling they could not express. Moreover, his voice was weary, like himself, and he was almost haggard when, in answer to calls, "Just a good-bye to our God-speed," he threw the rug from his knees, leaned out of the carriage window and spoke.

The on-looking guard, an Englishman, wanting to do the English square thing in any situation, had

raised his green flag, an incidental Irish portent, and had his whistle to his mouth to blow the departure. So waiting, he gave Parnell a full minute's grace, while he poured forth half a dozen burning sentences. A cloth travelling cap which he had put on, and did not now take off, sat so badly on his head that locks of his long, lank hair flew out beneath it. It was not an heroic head then, because wild and agitated, an outward tumult, like the man inwardly, but it was memorable.

What did he say in that hoarse, cold, yet molten, voice of his ? It was a siren warning to the Roman Catholic priests of Ireland that he would meet them, his embattled enemies, face to face on the morrow. He had never forgotten that it was the " exiles of Erin "—his exact phrase—who had given him his first God-speed. Had they any cause to regret that they had stood by him ? Nor would they have any now. " You will be with me to the end, and together we shall win for Ireland what God has determined her right." It was a lofty note, and yet a listener felt that it was a forlorn note ; and indeed calamity had fallen overpoweringly upon Parnell and the Irish Cause.

We live in an age when a more tolerant, more broad-minded view might have been taken of it all, and a disaster alike for Ireland and England averted.

Time mellows social sinning, as well as personal bereavement, and the love of Charles Stewart Parnell and Katharine O'Shea had elements in it which might make it classic when its notoriety and destructiveness have faded. They met by chance, or destiny, and they loved whole-heartedly, he a bachelor, against whom the world had no record even of "wild oats," she a gifted, beautiful woman whose marriage had been unlovely and unhappy.

Throw those things against the world's screen of great loves, that of Paolo and Francesca, that of Abelard and Heloise or that of Nelson and Emma Hamilton. Then whisper humbly to yourself the lament of Robert Burns, "Had we never loved so fondly," and, may be, you will feel that Parnell and the woman who became his wife fared hard, though the immediate dictum of Cardinal Manning remains. "There can," said he to a seeker of his opinion on the Parnell tragedy and romance, "be no argument about expediency from the point of view of politics, when a moral question remains."

Before he died, Manning had become a figure of exalted influence in the common life and labour of London. He could step down from the altar to the street and bring the spiritual prestige of the one to the practical problems of the other, without shock to either. He was discreet as to whom he spoke

for print, and careful, as with Victorian precision in letter-writing, of the form in which he spoke. But through his kindly secretary, dear little Canon Johnston, he was accessible, also gracious, and it was not easy for anybody to seem that in a drab place like his Archbishop's House on the lower confines of Westminster.

Was it a horse-bus strike, lasting a week, and holding up London in the 'Nineties, that took me to see Manning on a Sunday morning? A little wait in a room with aggressively upstanding bare chairs and two tall, old-fashioned candle-sticks burning on a writing-table. Without there was fog, and it came within as the ancient "London particular" knew well how to do. So, when Manning appeared from a quietly opened door, wearing his cardinal-red cassock and biretta, he seemed to move in a cloud of incense, though no acolytes attended him.

He looked both the colourful Prince of the Roman Church and the grey-skinned ascetic, and age and a stoop gave him a venerable and fragile air. His outheld hand was thin and bony, but it had a warm grasp, and his voice when he said, "Glad to see you—do sit down," was an evidence of his easy naturalness. He spoke not only deliberately but rather slowly, feeling his way, as if the lights

and shades of three personalities were in what he said ; a Churchman and ecclesiastical statesman, an Englishman of character and parts, and a man democratic and plain.

When he died and lay on his small, iron bed, in a room not larger than a monastery cell, he might have been a statue to the personal austerity of his life and the mental velvetness of his character. " You see by his face," said faithful Canon Johnston, " how peacefully he passed away," and the lines were so fine, so composed, that they might, indeed, have been cast in marble. Nothing to repine about, but a warrior who had laid aside his polished armour after a long campaign, and we only whispered " Amen," and left him to his rest.

His Church buried him with all its pageantry and pomp, but across the years, one thinks of him as he was to the eye, simple and serving, a picture he, perhaps, liked to associate with St. Francis of Assisi, his favourite saint. That, of course, was only part of him, for his personality had threads which, in other years, might have made him a subtle, considering English Cardinal Richelieu.



## V. HERALDS OF A NEW WORLD

*When modern life was young and English political elections were adventures ; and when Madame Blavatsky and Annie Besant were, with their Mahatmas, striking the trail of the miracle we call " Wireless."*

MANY of the things which are now as familiar to us as morning and night were only coming along in the Eighteen-Nineties, a time of great blooming, both in thought and creation. An original idea or invention is apt to find a cold reception, like a late baby in a grown-up family. Motherliness is needed to make a cradle rock well, and Fleet Street is a mother of men and women.

It gets the first, hazy gleams of new stars in the firmament of human life, and by hook and crook it hammers them into everybody in the name of news. Call it a " common informer," and you use a phrase which legally has a nasty taste, but in direct human significance is all right. It is true, though it may sound unlikely to stranger ears, that a deftly done newspaper paragraph, the tabloid of Fleet Street

and difficult to write, will blaze a trail which many sermons, speeches, or even treatises, would only darken to the waiting masses.

To-day we can speak on the telephone across the globe and back again, but that was not dreamt of in the 'Nineties. Even long-distance land telephones were not an order of the day, and this suggests one of those little adventures which enable Fleet Street to time not only its own stride but the march of the world at large. Ever the stimulus is this contact, by chance, circumstance or something else, with the comet of a season, and then its parade in the heavens of publicity.

A by-election had been taking place in a small English town rather historic for its swift changes in politics, and on that account interesting as a barometer of public opinion. Polling day had come round, and a lately recruited, very young, reporter, on a leading news-agency, found himself delegated to "do the result." Not merely that. He was exhorted to get it to London before anybody else, because there is a keen competition among the news-agencies to be first with election results, as with other things. The exhortation took the form of soft flattery, but there had also been a graver note of command to succeed in this mission. It was "You're the lad to do it," and "We expect you to

do it," that double text of life which is supposed to get the best out of us, and often doesn't.

What was the poor fellow to think or do? He wondered and again wondered while he sat in a London train carrying him to the town of the election, which need not be given its name, having regard to what happened, especially as it might have happened somewhere else, the god of luck being no geographer.

A cigarette is a breath for the mind, and our friend was lighting one when another young man, seated on the opposite seat in the railway carriage said, "Forgive me, but I've left my case at home—could you spare me one." Surely, and they talked while they smoked, and it turned out that they were both travelling to the same election. When they arrived they went and had lunch at a hostelry which is mentioned more than once in the chronicles of English literature, especially by Charles Dickens, and thus a friendship grew.

Mr. Fleet Street, with the candour of his calling—oh, yes!—said, "My people expect me to get the election result to them first, but I haven't the least idea how I'm to do it. There will be a dozen other men here, and we'll all, I suppose, be given the figures at the same time. Then it will be a rush to the telegraph office and devil take the hindmost."

He never mentioned the word "telephone," of course, because its day for such emergencies had not yet quite come.

"Let's see," quoth the other luncher, after a little ; "there may be a way out for you. I'm the Returning Officer's clerk, and that's why I'm here. The reporters will be waiting at the door of the counting room for the result, that being the usual thing. I'll be opening the door and asking them in all together, to hear the figures read out by the Returning Officer. Be close against the door and I'll recognise you as a friend and shake your hand. You'll find in mine a slip of paper ; bolt with it to the telegraph office."

And so it all fell out ; and the contents of that slip of paper were known in every London newspaper office, and in every London club, ten minutes before competing messages came along to confirm it. But, alas, the fortunate sender had his satisfaction sadly damaged while he was walking back to the Dickensian hotel where he was to stay the night. The free electors were expressing their feelings over the outcome of the contest, and this included some horse-play, for which, indeed, the town had made a reputation.

One specimen of it was a sweep's sack which a demonstrator neatly wrapped round the head and

shoulders of our stranger. When he had disentangled himself he was as black as a nigger, and at his hotel he was saluted with roars of laughter, hard for him to accompany. He made the best of it, even of the mocking merriment of two pretty barmaids, but to look ridiculous is to feel blasphemous. It took him the rest of the night to get white again, and he was sincerely glad to be back next day in Fleet Street.

True to its mission, it had, somewhat earlier, recorded what were, perhaps, the first Western whisperings of the magic we now call wireless telegraphy, or still more familiarly "wireless." May be even Fleet Street may not have known as much, but it could—as it always can—make out a good case for its forecasts of knowledge, especially with the help of that remarkable woman, Annie Besant, in her later life a red light of India, whose spiritual faiths have held her in fee, as she has held it.

Old is the story, no doubt, but the passage of time, even of centuries, does not make news old if it has a human appeal, much more, an appeal of the soul and the mind. Fleet Street would stir, as with the bursting free of the Fleet River itself, if some excavator came home from the Holy Land with another Sermon on the Mount, though anciently there was a chief sub-editor of whom it was said,



*Fleet Street in the 'Nineties and early Nineteen-Hundreds, when the horse-bus and the hansom gave it a very human air, and when it had "greater freedom and less responsibility" for the wayfaring journalist than it has in these clamorous nowadays.*

“ He wouldn’t print even that, unless he found it entered beforehand, in the ‘ Events for the Day.’ ” It would send all its young men by aeroplane to Stratford-on-Avon not, perhaps, to resurrect Marie Corelli’s gondola on the Avon, but if one page of an autobiography by William Shakespeare turned up. What “ news stories ” these surprises would be, because they would also be additions to the world’s treasury of knowledge.

No; it isn’t necessarily the immediateness of a thing that makes great news, although there is always that sort. Suppose that after the Deluge of the Old Testament, the Ark had not really come to rest on the top of Mount Ararat—did it?—but on the top of Mount Everest. Suppose, when it is eventually conquered, the Ark were found there, preserved amid the eternal snows by the eternal frosts, what a stir there would be in all the Fleet Streets of the world. Moreover, it was from India that there had come the great Theosophy “ boom ” of the ’Nineties, with its staggering Mahatmas and its intriguing claims to wonders never known on land or sea. Now, that tale is like reconstructing some Eastern antique, a piece gathered here, fitted into a piece gathered there, and the lot glued together with Fleet Street’s whispered nothings, but possibly it can be done.

A brilliant mind may travel dramatically or it may not, but Mrs. Annie Besant, when she said good-bye to Secularism, as earlier she had broken with Christianity, could not have fancied the queer controversy which would spring up. She had, she told her Secularist friends, at a meeting which one daily paper "starred" on a morning in the 'Nineties, been given a book to review, and it was by Madame Blavatsky. The title was "The Secret Doctrine," and the contents were an exposition of certain Eastern ideas and beliefs which this Madame Blavatsky, of Russian associations, a Colonel Olcott of America, and others, had already been proclaiming to a sceptical and critical Western world.

The book impressed, nay, captured Mrs. Besant to such an extent that she said to herself, "Here's the wisdom, the guidance in the eternal things, for which I have been searching." Therefore she went to Madame Blavatsky, placed herself under that amazing woman's tuition, and ended by becoming a Theosophist. No new doctrine had fallen on the earth from heaven, because its catechism was as old as the East; simply it had been brought West, and it satisfied the eager, searching spirit of Annie Besant. She was then in the intellectual bloom of early middle age, grave of mind but bright in personality, witty in conversation and arresting in



looks and demeanour. She was slight and English, while Madame Blavatsky was heavy and clumsy, an elderly woman uncouth to the eye save for her impressive head, her face of character and her deep, dreamy, withal sinister eyes.

Those were the personal facts which led to the Mahatmas, a discovered name then to the great English public, and one which set it by the ears with curiosity. Mahatmas were men, in India chiefly but elsewhere also, who, by spiritual evolution, had lifted themselves far above other humanity. They were a brotherhood who had existed for thousands of years and who had acquired a body of knowledge denied to ordinary men. This knowledge of the universe and its elements enabled them, for instance, to converse and communicate through space, no matter how far the distance might be. But, though such super-men, they were still men, these Masters or Mahatmas, and living simply in the world, not gods of uncertainty; and Mrs. Besant gave particular examples of their abnormal powers.

The stir made by this strange excursion into mysterious worlds was such that it might have been the fabled Indian magic carpet floating over London. Mahatmas could ring bells in the air, when there were no bells to ring, and they had been heard to do it. They could conjure roses from an Indian garden

and drop them among people gathered in a nearby house. Many strangenesses were theirs to command, but they made no miraculous claims whatever, nor did they seek adoration or notoriety. Just they bespoke a long succession of incarnations, each of which had come a little nearer the perfect spirituality demanded by Mother Nature for her latent secrets.

Still the wonders grew, and people asked what Mahatmas were like to the eye, and how did they show themselves? Colonel Olcott, an old traveller in India, said he had seen several, and he described a personal visit from one. This Mahatma came and touched the Colonel while he was asleep in an Indian native camp, and he jumped up and grasped the hand which awakened him. He did this instinctively, in self-protection, as anybody would, roused from sleep in surroundings which implied danger.

"Don't you know me?" asked a voice in Hindu, and Colonel Olcott recognised a Mahatma he had seen before in the astral body. He was, of course, an Indian, a man of years, with a benignant face, a gentle voice, and dignity in his very simplicity. They talked, and "When he went away he left something in my hand; a letter written on silken cloth." It was meant to be a token of the visit, and

the Colonel cited it to a London which was both credulous and incredulous as a proof that there really were Mahatmas.

Their vogue in the news passed, though not the name in Western ears, for Mahatma Gandhi has given it a new significance in India. What remained, after Professor Huxley, author of the phrase "corybantic Christianity" about Salvationism, and other scientific men had pooh-poohed the whole business? It was their unqualified day of the evolution theory and they would hear nothing which would clothe, soften or illumine its stark logic. Here was so much nonsense set going by erratic, unscientific minds, so many fairy tales, and not ingenious ones at that. Take it all away, said authority, clearly, definitely, no doubt rightly, and away it all went into the darkness from which it had come.

Except, perhaps, a kind of feeling, or instinct, such as a sensitive individuality or mass psychology does have; that creation had not yet parted with all its secrets, even to modern science and that possibly there was something in the ether which the East had discovered and the West hadn't. That, and, if you say so, nothing more, is worth memorising, having regard to what Marconi and companion men of genius have now achieved by wireless and

broadcasting through the ether, supreme marvels of this, our new day of revelation.

Certainly they are more worth having than the Siamese Twins, whose notoriety got an occasional word of recall in the Fleet Street of the 'Nineties. Tom Thumb was another remembered fashion, and Barnum, his showman, was still in the land of the living and fighting his battles over again in stories. There was the one about how he got rid of a tentful of spectators, to let in as many waiting outside. He made a hole in the canvas, put up a notice, “ This way for the Egress,” and the curious folk poured forth to see this strange bird !

We dabble no more in human “ freaks ” and we have little truck with sea-serpents and mermaids. How could we, in an age when there is a real miracle to be recorded any hour ? Is it the speed of a racing car, out to break the record ; a flying ship, as big and luxurious as a sea liner, sailing above London ; or the Prince of Wales, homeward bound from an African tour, taking breakfast at Marseilles, lunch at Paris, and tea with his father and mother at Windsor ?

A Street of Adventure ! Always Fleet Street has been that, for its place in the history of London and for its newspapers. Now we have a World of Adventure, and the only question with all of us

should, in a persuasive yet challenging modern saying, be, "What about it?"

There was in the 'Nineties a "Boy Captain," as he got to be called, who gave a very fine answer to the question, when I asked him for the story of the Clyde sailing-ship "Trafalgar." His name was William Shotton, he was the son of a sea captain, and he was only eighteen when he encountered an adventure that Conrad, master of the salt-water romance, could not have beaten as a yarn.

The "Trafalgar" sailed from Batavia, for Melbourne, in ballast; the captain had died of Java fever and two men were left ill in hospital; two others had deserted, so there was now a crew, all told, of twenty-three. The first mate had taken on the captain's job, and there was a new first mate; a seaman from the fo'c'sle had been made second mate and young Shotton was ranked third mate.

Unfortunately, the "Trafalgar" carried the fever with her; an able seaman died, then the temporary captain and the carpenter, next the first mate and after him the cook. Thus the crew, demoralised by all this, was left with an apprentice, just out of his time, as the only person who could navigate. But Boy Shotton had been taking his "trick" on the bridge since the "Trafalgar" left Batavia, and he had no doubt he could fetch her to

Melbourne. He held to that, though the men, seeing black, wanted him to navigate the ship to the nearest port in Australia.

"Anybody," said he, explaining the human situation in which he found himself, "who understands sailors will also understand their fidgetiness and the troubles they made as a result of it. Had I, from the fo'c'sle, seen a boy taking the bearings, day after day, on the bridge, I think I might myself have been uneasy, knowing he was the only frail guide on a trackless sea."

Moreover, all the time, the "Boy Captain" was having daily rounds of fever, and when the "Trafalgar" got into Australian latitudes she had rough weather, sails blown away and what not. The only thing the men could have done without his navigating knowledge would have been to bear up for land, any land they might happen to strike on the Australian Continent, and that would, however it fared with their lives, have meant the loss of the ship. As to being picked up by another vessel; well, the "Trafalgar" sighted nothing until she reached Melbourne.

The "Boy Captain" took her there all right and then came home and got his first "ticket," and no doubt he has had other sea thrills since then, but nothing could be more "ship shape and Bristol fashion" than this "Trafalgar" victory.

## VI. HOW THE HOME FIRES BURN

*A plain and coloured contrast between what was and what is, with in-takes about Oscar Wilde's trial, the tragic death of Lionel Johnson, that one-time London notoriety Jane Cakebread, and Phil May, the artist.*

SOMEbody, away back in the long ago, said with the double-edged cleverness which invites a retort, "But surely the people of Fleet Street are the lost tribe." "Nay," was the retort, "we are the found tribe as, if you wait, you will see in the goodness of progress." We have seen, without having to wait unduly, for in no sphere of life have more wonders come about than in journalism, which links all the other wonders to itself.

The "Fourth Estate" in the realm has risen to an influence which even holds counsel and hob-nobs with the other three traditional estates, the Lords Spiritual, the Lords Temporal and the Commons. But those who belong to it, and do its work, remain unpretentious socially, brotherly towards each other and good fellows. They earn more money

than their forerunners, thanks to organisation among themselves and to the betterment of wages in general, and they have surer, shorter hours, though these will always be long enough, having regard to the pace.

Mainly Fleet Street remains a man's street, and so must, for it is a land of rough-and-tumble adventure. A sound body, as well as a sound mind, is necessary for it, and indeed the second of these is of little use without the carrying machine of the first, and women are still the weaker, and so more elegant vessels. The woman journalist, however, has her essential place, and she fills it with an engaging quality and a sisterly charm.

Scots John Knox, if he were in Fleet Street, doing a weekly column of Calvinistic Notes in his fire-and-brimstone way, would have to apologise for roaring his "monstrous regiment of women" slogan, and there are Mary Stuarts, without her royal record, to whom he would be glad to apologise. Who but women could collect the news of women's doings, write the stream of gossip about them or edit the "Women's Page," without which no daily or evening paper is complete? That modern world of Fleet Street is now their undisputed kingdom, but there are women who, seeking no such sheltered employment, write challenging special articles,



criticise literature and the drama or sail forth as interviewers and reporters.

At least one woman journalist whom the Eighteen-Nineties brought out, could report her assignment beside the best men, and she was a pioneer in the independent and share-and-share-alike attitude which she insisted on towards them. If, on some news expedition, it was an affair of standing treat, she would claim her turn, while refusing the men's whisky-and-soda or whatever might be going.

Now such an occasion could hardly arise, for Fleet Street, either at home, or when it goes about the country, is almost an abstainer. May be a cocktail before a meal, a glass of wine with it, or a small Scotch-and-soda at night time. Nor is the good English beer of so many a drinking song neglected, but water and mineral waters have washed out the Bohemianism of old, and no doubt that is a good job, though a wash for anything always means a loss in its colour.

Therefore we have lost a certain colour which belonged to our elders, a hail-fellow-well-met comradeship which sprang from the more picturesque conditions of their journalism. This splash of the Bohemian sometimes expressed itself in distinctive hats and clothes, especially ties, but then

hadn't Oscar Wilde, sallying from his decorative house in artistic Chelsea, been preaching his aesthetic gospel for years before he fell at the Old Bailey? He had known Fleet Street at points, though he was the poet and the dramatist, and thus his trial was "no distant affair to it, but that of a familiar character.

The trouble about it, as one came later to learn, was just how, in a more reticent age than this, to report it, having regard to its character. There, in the dock at the Old Bailey, was a handsome and brilliant man, known by books and plays and dandily on platforms, and he was charged with an unnameable offence. It was a problem for Fleet Street, but a measure of publicity, meeting every need yet guarding the sanctities, was, of course, found.

English journalism, even if some folk may think the statement a bold one, never fails, in the bulk, to do the right thing in the right way. It is the crop of a stock, upright and upstanding, which has thriven on print and grafted it into the constitution. But it is also its own censor, and in this very fact it bears a responsibility which does not let freedom run into licence.

With equal human sense, Fleet Street claims some Christianity, some large-heartedness for itself, because it has its tragedies, as well as its romances.

Could not the pavement stones between St. Bride's Church, at its foot, and the Temple Church, near its top, tell them in many hard tears ? Broken hopes, dead ambitions, bodies gone smash, penury unto the borrowing of the classic Fleet Street half-crown ! Tom Hood might have made it another " Song of the Shirt," for he knew the old Fleet Street well. But the worst tragedy of all is when a man of talent, or even genius, who might do everlasting work, goes out in a mere sideways, as Lionel Johnson did in the 'Nineties.

As it chances, I can tell that tragedy freshly, from two sides, because a dear friend, the late Dr. Eugene M. Niall, was house-doctor at St. Bartholomew's Hospital when Johnson was brought in there on a stretcher. Here was a delicately built young man, with a beautifully shaped head, a refined, intellectual face and exquisite hands. He was unconscious, for he had fallen from a high stool in a Fleet Street tavern, backward on to the sawdusted floor, and cracked what an examination showed to be a very thin skull.

His name was brought with him into the casualty ward, but at one o'clock in the morning a house-doctor and his nurses may not have associated it with public authorship. Also Lionel Johnson was then hardly known beyond Fleet Street, which

faithfully proves its children before certifying them for circulation in the great world. It is as exacting as a matriarch in discipline and preparation and in "midnight oil," and this young man, come by an accident, had the retiring temperament of a child of letters.

Moreover, "down-and-outs" of Fleet Street, then a recognised and almost an organised company, were familiar at "Bart's" as seekers, by various tricks, of a night's lodging. Why should one not come in on a stretcher? only, as the house-doctor's swift glance showed now, it was somebody who, though simply, even roughly, dressed, did not belong to the "down-and-outs."

His pockets were searched for anything that might give information about him, and a letter from his mother was discovered. It was written fondly, almost anxiously, for it said, in so many words, "I am sending you a little money, but I cannot send any more. What we have already sent you, has compelled your father and myself to deny ourselves things we need at our age, and we hope you will now manage without more help from home." That letter became a mother's good-bye to a son on which she must have put great expectations, for every mother knows what nobody else knows.

Poor Lionel Johnson ! He might have come as near being a Charles Lamb as any writer we have had in our time, for even his book reviews were delicious essays. He believed with Lamb that " There is more reason for saying grace before a new book than before a good dinner." He knew, with Theodore Parker, that " The books which help you the most are those which make you think the most." Also he had learned enough of Fleet Street to wonder, in Christina Rossetti's verse :

*" Does the road wind up hill all the way ?*

*Yes, to the very end.*

*Will the day's journey take the whole, long day ?*

*From morn to night, my friend."*

That night he had been in Fleet Street, from his lodgings farther west in London, to call at the office of a morning paper for which he especially wrote. Its Literary Editor, Henry Nevinson, when, hours after, he heard of the fall in the tavern, went to St. Bartholomew's and identified his friend and contributor. There never was a chance of recovery, and Lionel Johnson merely lingered on a day or two, always unconscious, and so he died, a loss to Fleet Street, which is proud of his memory.

It has ever been proud, though often careless, of

## A "JOURNALISTS' CORNER"

its sons, and it is learning to be proud of its daughters, of whom it should not be careless. But where the survival of the fittest is necessarily a law, there must be a philosophy of suffering. Mother Nature in her rawest state is cruel as well as kind, and the intensive cultivation of mankind may emphasise that streak in new forms. The philosophy of Fleet Street is to gather its ninety-and-nine within the safety of the fold. There will always be the hundredth one who stays without, and whose errant nature makes for martyrdom, without hope of ever being beatified.

It is a short walk from Fleet Street to St. Paul's Cathedral, but the road may be long before a great journalist gets buried there, unless he be also a Dean, like Dr. Inge. On the way there, however, is St. Bride's Church, become, in effect, the church of Fleet Street as a newspaper world, and therefore of its writing people, when they have a brother to mourn and bury. It has its memorials of a few men associated with journalism, but why should it not have a "Journalists' Corner" as Westminster Abbey has a "Poets' Corner"? The suggestion was, I fancy, my own, and it has been talked about, and some day, who knows, it may just evolve into being, as "Poets' Corner" did. Certainly it would be a shrine where the weary Fleet Street pilgrim

could croon to himself the song of the wounded Border knight :

*“ I’ll e’en sit doon and rest a while,  
And then I’ll rise and fight again.”*

Fleet Street never knew a man more generous, more helpful to misfortune, than Phil May, prince of black-and-white artists and great humorist ; and a tavern incident, in whole contrast to Lionel Johnson’s tragedy, will illustrate this. Phil had a few cronies with him and, as usual, was treating everybody, when a tattered, shivering creature stuck his head in at the door, with “ Can you give me a copper, gentlemen ? ” Then he opened the door, seeing, no doubt, a “ Come hither ! ” in Phil’s eye and in the disposition of his hand towards the money in his trousers pocket. Next the ragged man was speaking of when he was a Fleet Street hand himself, most likely a story invented but well told.

Phil, being interested, began to ask questions, though no cross-examiner, and the end of it all was that he took off a fine fur coat he was wearing, for the time was winter, put it on the man, and sent him away both wondering and rejoicing. What happened to that coat nobody ever heard, not even its former owner, who, when a friend gently remonstrated with him, merely said, “ Well, the poor devil

looked so cold." Had he been told, "Of course the man will go and sell it," he would probably have just answered, "Well, I only hope he'll get what it's worth and use the money better than I did when I was extravagant enough to buy it."

Phil May, like other members of his gifted race, rather liked striking raiment, and he dressed as if he were half-artist, half-jockey. He was fond of a horse, and rode well, and his artistic genius made him lionised everywhere, especially when he once went to America. He bore admiration with humility, but he did not like it, even when it came sincerely from "black-and-white men," who knew him to be a master. The adoration of women, so dear to some celebrities, left him completely cold, the hardest target it could be up against.

Many people had the idea that "Phil," as we just called him, did his drawings in the few life-lines that made them speak to the public. As a matter of fact he drew a sketch with as many links in it as a spider's web. Then, with equal labour, he scored out all this tangled scaffolding, until only the vital lines remained. He might have said, following Opie, "How do I make my pictures? Sir, I make them with brains and pains."

He made a life-like sketch of a face with marvellous quickness, and that was necessary when he



was asked "to do" Jane Cakebread, and I went with him to write about her. But who was Jane Cakebread? Phil May knew very well, being intensely attracted by "human documents," especially London "human documents."

For years the papers recorded her misdeeds, and some of them probably kept the standing heading, "Jane Cakebread Again." She was constantly in the police courts for being "drunk and disorderly," and sometimes, as part of her naughtiness, she would assault a policeman, although she never damaged one. She was familiar, by name, to every Londoner as an "incurable drunkard," and eventually Thomas Holmes, police-court missionary and understanding man, took her in hand. It was at his home, down on the marshes of East London, that Phil May and myself interviewed her as a public and enigmatic notoriety.

He, seeing what a tragic creature she was, at once gave her all the money he had, and there she sat, jingling the golden sovereigns and leering at him. She was old and ugly and bedraggled, but that only made her the more interesting to Phil, and we came away from her with some fine sketches and some strange information imparted to us by Thomas Holmes. He told us that Jane was not really a drunkard in the ordinary sense, but took a drink of whisky or gin, both cheap then, when she could get it.



*A black-and-white sketch, by Phil May, of Jane Cakebread, a London notoriety of the Eighteen-Nineties, when she was a "human problem" that would be better understood to-day.*

If she took more than one drink, it had an extraordinary effect on her, for she became sexually mad.

She was temporarily a sex lunatic, and the desire and impulse behind that were the explanation of her doings, including her anger when grave, stately and correct London policemen didn't want her arms round their necks. Thomas Holmes had her put in a home, was himself Christ-like in his care for her, and, with declining years, she became less tempestuous, even when she did have "a glass." To-day she would instantly be a subject for "psycho-analysis" or some other modern stethoscope of the mind and body, and in that case Fleet Street would not cry, as it so often did in head-line and poster, "Jane Cakebread Again."

One of Phil May's black-and-white studies of her survives, and to look at it, so characteristic of his genius for seizing personality, is to recall a story, either true or well founded, about him later in Fleet Street. He had joined the staff of "Punch," and his mothering little wife had taken him from the plains of Kensington to live on the heights of Hampstead. One night Phil was homeward bound there and a friend was seeing him into a cab for the journey. "Don't know your new address," said the friend. "What is it?"

Phil, with his eternal cigar, his aslant nose, and

his ever-conquering smile, turned a puzzled face to the question. "Can't, old chap, on the life of me, remember," he said. "But give me a bit of chalk and I'll sketch the house on the cab!" And he would have done so.

No doubt he got home, somehow, for he had friends at every corner of the London he loved so well and served so well with his rare genius. He knew its enchantment as well as its pathos, as there was a clear sense of the poetic behind his black, haunting eyes. One could fancy him standing, lost in mystery and imagination, before a drawing that another, very different, artist, Mr. Felix Moscheles, once showed me, because Robert Browning had christened it "The Isle's Enchantress."

A sea-nymph asleep in a sea-shell; two sisters in beauty guarding her while she slept; a wide atmosphere of salt waters! That was all, and it was all very Victorian, and so, possibly, was Browning, when, having looked his fill at the painting, he sat down and wrote a verse about it which you will not find in any of his books—only here:

*"Wind-wafted from the sunset, o'er the swell  
Of summer's slumbrous sea, herself asleep,  
Came shoreward in her iridescent shell  
Cradled, the Isle's Enchantress. You now keep  
A drowsy watch beside her, watch her well."*

## VII. THE IMMORTAL SALVATIONIST

*Some particular conversations, offering fresh, lively anecdote, with General William Booth, whose soul goes marching on in the army of Democratic Christianity which he dreamt and created, inspired by his wife, Catherine Booth.*

A CELEBRITY, when you get a "close-up" of him, when you look through the windows of his being, is nearly always different from what you had expected him to be. Sometimes he is better, often not so good, but in any case, you meet the individual himself, as well as the acclaimed celebrity.

This discovery falls constantly to those who follow the calling and calls of Fleet Street. Some wave of events throws a man up, an Arthur cast upon the Cornish shore by "dark Dimdagel." Perhaps his fame is only for the moment, perhaps for the term of his natural life, rarely for all time. Anyway, you come in as a news-doctor, and a dramatic personal experience of the kind arose when General William Booth, having created the spiritual Salvation Army,

launched his Darkest England Social Scheme, also a crusade of many fruits and many echoes.

Probably he got the name, “ Darkest England,” from the title of Stanley’s book of African travels, for the General, like Shakespeare, and most other characters of force or genius, knew when to borrow or adapt. He and his Salvationists had worked out a new social reformation, as a needful pendant to the fruitful “ hot gospelling ” they had, for years, carried on in the streets and slums of London, and in the big provincial cities.

It was confided to a book, a sort of new Social Bible which all the world would know as “ Darkest England and the Way Out.” But all the world was already anxious to know, for General Booth and his valiant, unselfish soldiers of “ blood and fire ” were masters of advertisement before it had sounded elsewhere with its universal modern call. How was Fleet Street to obtain details of the scheme, because that meant “ giving away ” the book and so spoiling its sale when precious money was needed for precious ends? Salvationism was practical, as well as visionary ; it dreamt, but it also wanted to do things, to lift the earthly body as well as the heavenly soul, and here was another stroke in that sense.

Approaches, suggestions, even, if you like,

cajoleries, were made to General Booth that he should say something before the appearance of his book, in order to satisfy the great public interest. He refused as decisively as a Chancellor of the Exchequer would refuse to whisper a word about a forthcoming Budget. It was a King's Speech secrecy, nothing less, and for good reasons, and he was going to the country until the book came out.

This situation was sadly discussed one night by the editor of a leading London daily which sympathised with Salvation Army work, and a young member of the staff, who had been his scribe and ambassador in such sympathy. They parted, resigned to the conclusion that no more could be done, but next morning the junior—very junior—person awakened with an awakening thought.

Often ideas come in the morning when they will not come in the night, perhaps because originality, the most coy inhabitant of the mind, is tired or gone asleep. Also they are braver in the morning, when the day is very young, and that is only in consonance with human nature.

It was a Saturday, nothing of a day in Fleet Street, which has to observe the Jewish Sabbath, or let readers go without news on the Monday. Why not go to the country for the day? Better still, why

not, as a last desperate chance, invade General Booth in the country.

He was at Clacton-on-Sea, where his wife, the wonderful, spiritual Mother of Salvationism, was seriously ill. That meant delicacy as well as decorum, but, may be, both could be met becomingly by understanding tact. It was not like assailing a perfect stranger, and the unlikely may be the likely in the Street of Adventure.

So up and away through London to the railway station and down through the flat lands of Essex. It may, in the words of the song, be "fine to get up in the mornin'," if the sun is out and the birds are singing. But "it is better to lie in bed" if London is clothed in a damp, dank, grey mist, which is an evil habit with it at other times of the year than winter. Still, if something worth while be on foot, this can be faced in the young years and only good come of it.

A nervous pull at the bell of a modest house on the outskirts of Clacton; the sending, by an answering maid, of a simple note to General Booth; and then, after a little, a heavy footstep descending the stairs to the hall, where youth waited with its heart bumping, though even Victorian youth was supposed never to be scared. Next there appeared a tall, rugged figure, with a face like one of the



Biblical Prophets and a menace in it as severe. The long, grey beard seemed to shake in wrath, the beaked-nose was twitching, and the tousled head of hair suggested a sea in tempest. It was the General in cloth slippers, so worn that they would hardly follow his feet, and a faded dressing-gown which he had thrown over his Salvationist uniform, altogether a very angry figure of "Blood and Fire."

You see, a minister of news has to be prepared for any kind of reception when he goes seeking it, if it is not thought desirable he should be given it. Moreover, the "interview" was not then so familiar in English public life as it is now. A notable foreigner, Prince Kropotkine, scholar and reformer, whom Tsarism banished from Russia, really expressed this in a little note he would send from his study to his front door, if you called on him without an invitation. "Persons," it ran, "desirous to interview me are requested to conform with the usual laws of politeness and ask me first, in writing, whether I wish to be interviewed." That was the worst kind of reception, because it left nothing to be done, as you did not see your man, and, at least, I was now seeing General Booth.

A voice, deep and moved, was saying, "What's this, sir? What on earth do you mean by invading me when you know—none better—that I refuse to

see you or anybody from Fleet Street. It's—it's, it's . . . !” And he went on like a thunder-storm, with lightnings of displeasure crashing and flashing all about. Never a word said the invader, knowing that a suppliant, yet upright silence, was his only possible way through with the Grand Salvationist.

Presently a faint smile crept into the General's eyes, as if he felt he had blamed enough and did not want to be quite the Biblical prophet pronouncing a Biblical curse. Always his patriarchal air and his intense aliveness to the modern spirit, struck me as the ideal equipment for his great job. But leadership is never leadership without power and its dignity, and a heart warming a mind. His naturally kind heart was softening him towards my invasion, winning him round, and soon, with a characteristic swing of his right hand, he, as it were, lifted the curse, a blessed relief.

“ Well,” he said gently, if not exactly graciously, “ since you are here, and won't go, I suppose I must tell you a little about my ‘ Darkest England ’ plans. But please understand it must only be a little,” and he shook his menacing right hand to emphasise that he meant it.

Next he led the way into a small, plainly furnished side-room, and there, walking up and down, his head bent in reflection, he expounded his plans for

nearly an hour with gesture of body and sonority of voice. What were they? Grave plans, spacious plans, human plans, Christ-like plans, difficult plans? Perhaps, but everything greatly worth doing was difficult, and that should be the high stimulant of human enterprise when it sought to benefit humanity.

If a man became a social wreck and a burden on society, it was either his own fault or he was unfortunate in his circumstances. That man should be lifted, however he fell, and by material means, as well as by spiritual means. If he fell through vice, his nature must first be changed, a spiritual task; but if he was the victim of his surroundings, he must be isolated from them. Our social system seemed to work wrongly, for did a policeman, when he caught a thief by the scruff of the neck, think of reforming him? No. Of punishing him? Certainly. Of correcting him—perhaps; but not of converting him permanently into a worthy citizen.

The General had always reckoned he could save any man in a religious sense, unless he was a confirmed loafer. Now he was convinced that, by social and spiritual healing combined, he could reclaim even the worst loafer. Altogether, the Darkest England Scheme meant new methods, more direct methods, wiser methods, more human



*Sport and General.*

*General Booth, Creator of the Salvation Army*



methods with the outcast, the derelict and the unfortunate. It was not a Utopian dream, but a reality planned for realities, and its parable was :

“ Don’t throw a mere fragment of bread on a sea of trouble, but go forth and chart that sea, and with mankind’s help and God’s blessing there would be a rich, rewarding harvest.”

So and so spoke General Booth to an audience of one, for he was aflame with the ideals and possibilities of his social campaign. At the door he said “ Good-bye,” and while he stood for a moment, the sun shone on his striking grey head and illumined his face of rare character. His talk made a long, unexpected Monday-morning “ special ” in Fleet Street, and later there came a personal copy of the book, “ Darkest England,” from him, in which he had written, “ With faith in the future—William Booth.” There I read his social battle-cry and my own forgiveness, and perhaps something more, for many other meetings followed with the Great Salvationist.

Some of them carried conversations on original things worth knowing about the army of “ blood and fire.” Out of what, precisely, sprang the name The Salvation Army? While the General was engaged in his earlier Christian Mission, the Rifle Volunteer Movement was large in public interest.

That caused one of his lieutenants, Commissioner Railton, to write, "The Christian Mission is a Volunteer Army." "I looked over his shoulders for a minute," said General Booth, "and then drew my pencil through 'Volunteer' and wrote 'Salvation,' and we were christened for ever, 'The Salvation Army.' "

What about the uniform and the motto, "Blood and Fire"? He thought Salvationists should have some uniform, so they could recognise each other when they met. Red meant revolution, and they were out to revolutionise the world by saving it for Christ. Blue was typical of holiness, and yellow of the purifying power of fire. "Blood," in the motto, stood for the Blood of Christ, while "Fire" meant the cleansing fire of the Holy Spirit.

The General retorted with a flashing eye on those who, in its early days, charged the Salvation Army with "vulgarising religion," especially by its music. The Hindu was attracted to religious exercises by the tom-tom, the American negro by the drum. Play Mozart to the hungry wasters of East London, and they would neither appreciate him nor be led by him to prayer. The Salvation Army played the music of the common people, and the common people had listened to it.

A claim he often made, and liked to make, partly

perhaps because it was a tribute to his beloved wife, was that the Salvation Army was really the pioneer in emancipating the modern woman. His wife had much to do with the place women, from the first, occupied within the Salvationist ranks. "When we were courting," he said shyly, beautifully, "I used to tell her that a woman had most in her heart but a man most in his brain." She would laughingly accept the first statement but refuse the second, and I became as enthusiastic as she was for the emancipation of women, as we all clumsily called the movement."

The "Mother of the Army" was also its "Lady of the Lamp" to her husband, and their married life was ideal in private happiness and public work. Their human and spiritual patriotism encompassed their own household, their own country, and the whole race of mankind. She had a womanly gift of sympathy which Oliver Wendell Holmes might have been describing when he wrote about himself in a letter that has only recently come to light.

"I have often," he said, "found that, in opening my own heart, I have opened another I little thought of reaching. Sometimes . . . I have written with tears in my eyes, and then I have found, what Horace told so long ago, that I made them find their way from beneath other lids."




There were tears that would not keep back in General Booth's eyes the day the "Mother of the Army" was buried, for her loss was a sore stroke to him. But he girded up his loins and went on with his mission, which was still to take him to many near and far places among the peoples of the earth, before he also, like some warrior in the Bible, gave up the ghost.

Once, when he returned from an American visit, I went to see him at his home in the north of London, and he rolled off his Trans-atlantic impressions. As I was leaving, he suddenly got down on his knees, saying, "I prayed for every newspaper man I met in America, and I'm going to wind up by praying for you."

He did, mentioning me by name, again and again, in his invocation to Heaven, and there I stood, stupidly, awkwardly, not knowing what to do. They were long moments and difficult moments, but they were moments which abide with me as a living and illuminating flame from the Immortal Salvationist.

## VIII. MILESTONES & THEIR MEANING

*Such as the Victorian crinoline and its constant threat to return, or the breach-of-promise case and its decline ; also weightier affairs that bring in personages like Henry Labouchere and Cecil Rhodes.*

“  TOILING hands of mortals ! ” says Robert Louis Stevenson, “ O wearied feet, travelling you know not whither ! ” That might be a text for life in Fleet Street, where, “ When we have discovered a continent, or crossed a chain of mountains, it is only to find another ocean or another plain upon the further side.” If it were otherwise it would not be the Street of Adventure, either in prosperous times or in hazardous times ; and both come, like friends and enemies in personal life.

The something beyond is always the great news, because, caught in flight, it has unknown elements, far possibilities, which stir the imagination. Or, unsuspected but instinctively felt, the same firing quality may be hidden in a most common subject or object. One test is loudly dramatic, the other

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intimately human, in that everybody is concerned, high and low, peer or pauper.

Is it a battle, where it should not be, like the strange one with rascals in East End Sidney Street, or a battle about the short and the long of women's skirts? Either combat excites universal interest, but the latter may come round half a dozen times in the course of years and yet remain interesting. What a to-do there was when Victorian dress-makers, who had been young with the crinoline, tried, when they grew old, to make it fashionable again, just as our young women were becoming "emancipated" and beginning to think of the vote. That controversy rang the same changes of dress as we have this day, merely in a rather different key.

You know the play "Milestones," and that you can go back with it on many fashions and customs, and yet find the stream of English life steadily progressive. Miss To-morrow is apt to sniff and look askance at Miss Yesteryear, but under the skin they are sisters, apart from fashions and mere habits.

The girl who plays the ukelele to-day or turns on the gramophone and moves to it with her "dancing partner" is only doing differently what her Victorian sister did in shyly consenting to sing when, after dinner, the men had come to the

drawing-room. She slowly deposited her fan and her gloves somewhere, took off her bracelets and her rings and shot her fingers over the piano keys. The "butterfly touch" remains in womanly human nature, fortunately for everybody, being simply an inviting gesture, but now it has, like so many other things, become "jazzed."

The vast change is that women speak out and are heard, whereas of yore they only whispered and were, or were not, heard. Still they wouldn't wear the crinoline again or even the bustle which succeeded it, an odd tail-piece of dress as useless as the appendix in the human body. They would wear clothes with the times, for, mind you, the later Victorians believed themselves, rightly in culture and mentality anyhow, to be mightily advanced.

How could a woman ride a bicycle, or climb on to the top of a London bus, if she wore a crinoline? Not the knife-board bus, certainly, with a steep narrow stair leading up to two hard, length-wise seats, a general sense of being uncomfortably in the air, a look around for something to grip, in case of a particularly bad jolt, and the weather-beaten driver's assurance, "All right, Miss, I'm strapped to my seat, so hang on to me."

By the way, has a proper specimen of that most Cockney and Victorian public vehicle been pre-

served in any of our national museums ? It outlived the elastic-sided boots of old English tradition, and at its birth, it was, at least, as wonderful and elegant as they were, but it wasn't as comfortable for human flesh and bones, not to speak of nerves, if there were any then. Possibly there were, but they were apologised for when they occurred, not trumped aloud, as an Englishman says, " I have a bad liver ! " to the horror of a Frenchman who says, " Oh, my poor stomach ! " to the horror of an Englishman.

" John Strange Winter," who wrote " Bootle's Baby " and other, in two ways, good Victorian tales, was so indignant about the crinoline threat to her sex that she proposed an Anti-Crinoline League, and gave my enquiring self her reasons. It was all the calculated work of those fashionable dress-makers, and the men of them rather than the women. How absurd it was that a pack of men in Paris, or anywhere else, should dictate to women what they were to put on, or, as tyrannically, what they were not to put on. But there they were, at it again, as, for sufficiently evident reasons, they always would be at it.

Peace has now definitely, perhaps, fallen on the crinoline, except as a relic for fancy dress, as it has fallen on men's lace ruffles and silk knee-breeches,

but the sartorial horizon is never certain. There were certain signs, "John Strange Winter" explained, voicing her generation and its outlook, and warning us, which were to be suspected whenever Bond Street or the Rue de la Paix said "Crinoline."

Wide skirts and the chignon fashion of hair-dressing were two ; and wasn't the "bun" of the 'Nineties a move towards the chignon. The modern "bob," or shingle, was not then dreamt about, for King Solomon's axiom that "A woman's hair is a woman's glory" was still a universal acceptance, except among the more sensible heathen.

Anyhow, if women didn't want the crinoline, why should they accept it? To which question there were only the answers that reside in the lovely, unknown maze of feminine nature. It is a divine land to explore, but the wise traveller knows that if he does so, he may emerge less sure of his wisdom.

Who told me that story about Robert Louis Stevenson in Samoa, to which he had brought a gardener from Sydney, where he printed his Father Damien pamphlet, now worth much cash, if you have an original copy, with his corrections in blue pencil, as I had, until it disappeared? His mother, his wife and his stepdaughter were with him at Vailima, and they all took an interest in "the grounds," as the Scots words goes, or once went.

Comes the gardener man to him, one day, and says, "I think, sir, I'm not a success here, and I'll be returning to Sydney." "But why?" said Stevenson, and then, "Ah, I see, too many masters—I mean mistresses. But, my friend, you understand women? No; my friend, you don't. No man ever understands them—quite understands them."

Certainly a nice woman, a normal woman, hates to be odd, and by that she means to be, or seem to be, different from other women about her. Therefore when mid-Victorian crinolines were the vogue, she had to accept them or, "John Strange Winter" put it, be thought a "perfect guy." Nay, there were folk who actually held them becoming, who saw grace in many expanded petticoats, and passion in their swing.

Nonsense! Think, again, of the burning accidents they caused and of their menace to health, because the whole weight of the clothes was thrown on the waist, and waists were small when whalebone corsets were worn. Husbands should reflect on that fact and they could not escape another, the extra expense their crinolined wives and daughters would cause them.

Dear husbands and fathers! Have they any relief in this year of grace when their women folk wear so little and pay so much for it?

Every era has its individual women and men, to whom, when any urgent or lively question is on the carpet, Fleet Street goes for public advice ; so many advisers in ordinary. Henry Labouchere, familiarly called " Labby," held such a position, and he was always sure to say something pat, if not also pert. He was as puckish as Lord Beaverbrook, whom he also resembled in that he was a newspaper owner, though it was only of a weekly, " Truth," which he founded and made a piquant influence, and a terror to knaves.

" Labby " would be found at his house, in Old Palace Yard, Westminster, writing personal paragraphs and eternally smoking a fat cigarette in a holder. He was short and round, with thinning grey hair, a closely trimmed beard, keen, beady eyes and well-kept clothes which gave him a dapper air but left him an arresting and supple personality. He knew most things happening in his political day, and being an able as well as a popular Radical, not only in shoemaking Northampton, for which he sat, but throughout the country, everybody wondered why Gladstone did not give him office.

He, himself, also wondered, and he could be very amusing and cynical about the Grand Old Man's gesture to him when he was forming his last Government. " But, of course, dear Mr. Labouchere, you



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would not think of sacrificing the great influence you wield as a private member, as an editor, and as a personality, to occupy any office whatsoever." Such, in effect, was the message with which a high-placed



*Gladstone, all eagerness and eloquence, and his old-fashioned collar were familiar and characteristic in Victorian cartoons, of which here is a fragment by Harry Furniss.*

emissary came to him from the "G.O.M." If he would say he did not want to be in the Government but under the gangway, then the "G.O.M." would always consult him on public matters. This was "Labby's" account of what happened, given as a little personal note on Gladstone's difficulties in Cabinet making, he, himself, according to the emissary, being a chief difficulty.

It is rememberable that he thought Lord Rosebery,

with whom he was never friendly, against him in Gladstone's counsels. Also he understood, what was of still more vital moment, that, directly or indirectly, Queen Victoria had said she would not be pleased to see him in the Cabinet. On all this "Labby's" comment was that he had never sought a place in the Government, and that he had never asked a Minister, *in esse* or *in posse*—a characteristic Victorian expression—for anything. But those were grave and lofty matters of other conversations, and what concerns us was one about this threatened return, very late in Queen Victoria's reign, of the mid-Victorian crinoline.

It is a pity Henry Labouchere did not leave an autobiography, for it would be a life-story our young people might like. He was modern before his day, and yet there was definitely a "date" in his deliverance about the crinoline :

"It doesn't seem to me there's any particular objection to it in the moderate form, as I remember, in which it was first worn. With red or blue skirts and Balmoral boots, it made, believe me, a quite pretty and artistic costume. Not merely that, but the original crinoline was very useful for keeping a woman's skirts out of the gutter and allowing her freedom to walk. Also it was economical, in the way that it permitted so many changes, a red

petticoat or a blue one, a dark zouave jacket or a light one, and so on."

Ever there was a quizzical twinkle in "Labby's" eye, the signal for sparkle in his conversation, and his "wisdom while you wait" got him playfully called the Sage of Palace Yard. He could discourse divertingly on most subjects, sprinkling his talk with spice, as, "Might I suggest one trouble about the crinoline in any form? It reveals the feet, and so many English women have big feet." He would find them very revealed, big or little, in our latest age of women's fashions, but he would also notice what elegance silk stockings and smart shoes can achieve.

Much in contrast to Henry Labouchere was another Victorian, several times met, Cecil Rhodes, who resembled the "Iron Duke" in that he had no small talk. He could be spoken with on South Africa, where he was "The Colossus," or on Imperial questions generally, but not the most daring spirit in Fleet Street would have approached him about crinolines, or his own clothes. He was, like Kitchener later, supposed to be a "woman-hater," though in both cases it probably was not true. One cites the story of somebody who said, "A woman-hater—what's that? Oh, I know, a man who has had no mother"; which reduced the thing to nonsense.

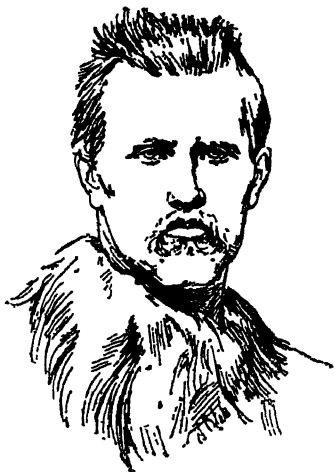
Rhodes was notoriously careless about his clothes, and for a tall, well-set-up, handsome man, that was to throw away an advantage, with women anyhow. At home, in Cape Town, some intimate friend, meeting him in the street, would say, "My dear Rhodes, but this suit of yours is threadbare, and really you must get some new clothes." "All right," he would answer; "you are going to London soon and you know my tailor—ask him to send me a batch."

He never knew his own hat, and he would take anything from a rack and stick it upon his head, provided it was big enough to stay there. Sound worldly wisdom came from that head, when Rhodes, being asked, after the Jameson Raid, to resign some office, cabled: "Let resignation wait." It might be a motto on any hasty man's writing-table, because observance of it not only "gives to think," as the French say, but also gives time to think.

Clothes and the woman! Arms and the man! They have, in their working out, brought much grist to the mills of Fleet Street, for many innocent or ignorant folk think of it in that material fashion. "Oh," say they, "the papers only publish what will sell them," but it isn't really like that. When Colonel Lindbergh, without saying a word about it, flew the Atlantic alone, he made fine "copy,"

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but he likewise made a milestone in the history of aviation. The value of news is largely a question of its fitting into the moment, as anybody can per-



*Fridtjof Nansen.*

*A London artist's impression of the famous Norwegian explorer, when, as a young man, he was seeking the perilous secrets of the White Arctic in his good ship "Fram," and getting "Farthest North."*

ceive by recalling a once prevalent "heading," "Nansen and the North."

He was going after the Arctic when it was an almost unknown land to us and therefore rich with all sort of perils and possible discoveries. Now explorers have been to both Poles, and a noteworthy

thing is that Scott's last journey in the Antarctic is probably more impressed on the world's mind than any other man's Arctic or Antarctic achievements, simply because it was so tragic and so heroic. "Nansen and the North" would not, with our fuller knowledge of the Arctic, animate the posters of the new Fleet Street, but another Scott adventure would be another epic. His conquering of the South Pole, only to find Amundsen had anticipated him ; the walking out into the blizzard of one of his colleagues, that the others might survive ; the final tragedy and Scott's diaries—ah, it was, and remains, an epic of very splendid adventure.

Unheroic things are apt to die, and we may see an example of this in the comparative absence now, from the newspapers, of breaches of promise. Aforetime love-letters, produced as evidence and read in court, took up columns, which people who knew the parties read with a chuckle, human nature being what it is. Slapping damages were often given for lost coronets and broken hearts, whereas we may now hear any day that the engagement between Mr. So and So and Miss Don't You Know has been cancelled.

That takes us back to a period when love and marriage were regarded as the only outlet for a woman's life, and so she must have the protection of

the law for them. But even the Victorian prudent man and prudish woman questioned the need for breach-of-promise actions, and there was a controversy about changing the law which makes them possible. The pros and cons of the subject ran up and down the country on wings which, as modern thought goes, would merely flutter the message : "Engaged. Oh, yes, but if, later, we think the marriage won't do, why, we'll just say so to each other, and end the affair."

There was long precedent for the breach-of-promise action, which, of course, any of you can still bring if you have the courage to face a mocking modern generation. It existed, as came out in newspaper discussion, so far back as the reign of Charles I, and it was just like a Royal Stuart to think of a broken heart—afterwards ! Or, may be, at that gay time ladies had to be protected from "designing men," but think of healing a wounded heart with pounds sterling ! European countries thought it one of John Bull's little eccentricities and, indeed, quoted it to prove him unromantic.

But great lawyers argued it fair and well, where there had been pecuniary loss, not otherwise, and, English-like, we just went on to another topic of talk. Thus controversy may again leap up about "breach," half-dead legal institution though it be,

and, in that case, Fleet Street will do its duty of publicity and guidance, saying the while :

*" I tell the things I know, the things I knew,  
Before I knew them, immemorially."*

It may not be enough to do that only, for there are many suggestive and deductive minds in the region between Chancery Lane and Ludgate Hill. Why not an article to prove an association between the going out of the breach-of-promise case and the going out of the " Poets' Corner " in the weekly newspapers ? The Victorians liked that corner and kept it full, but an " Ode to Phyllis " nowadays would only anger her, and perhaps cause her to ring up the editor, demanding, " Why, sir, waste your space on that silly sentiment when I want to find something entirely fresh in lip-sticks, and where, besides the Monte Carlo and Lido beaches, I can comfortably kipper my skin in the sun."

Happily the ode, or something else in sentimental verse, cannot be quite dead, however low its vogue and quality have fallen, for not long ago a president of a local Byron Society wanted a London publisher to publish a " little thing of mine " ; and lo, it began :

*" When gladsome spring doth ope the rose,  
Who will with kerchief close his nose ? "*



That brings back the terrible moment a certain London literary editor had when Swinburne died, and a lesser, but well-established, English poet sent in an ode to his memory, for appearance in next day's paper. It opened with these lines :

*“ And is it true that he has gone  
From Putney Hill to Helicon ? ”*

No, this ode did not get into print, but went back to the distinguished author, with a letter more ingenious and inventive of excuses than most editorial epistles. Perhaps it was only, Swinburne being dead, that the other poet had nodded for a moment, as even a Homer sometimes will.

## IX. MEET NOTABLE AMERICANS !

*George W. Smalley, a pioneer ambassador of Transatlantic news ; Mark Twain, humorist to the world, grave man really ; John Hay and stories of Lincoln, whom he knew well ; George Haven Putnam and Henry White.*

PROBABLY no place-name is more familiar to all the world than Fleet Street, unless it be, a picturesque contrast, Monte Carlo. It means "news from home" to the English-speaking peoples oversea, and that gives it a tenderness, perhaps even to our cousins of America.

This cousinship is millions of population more distant than it was when the Great Republic struck apart, a proof in itself that here was a "chip of the old block." But never was America, through its newspapers, so firmly in Fleet Street as it is to-day, when the deep-sea cables, the high-heavens "wireless" and the ocean telephone are rivals as bearers of tidings, good and bad.

Hands across the Atlantic ! That means, first and foremost, news across the Atlantic, otherwise

there would not be the mutual knowledge which cements a hand-grip. An early builder of that great link was George W. Smalley, who, in the Eighteen-Nineties, was London Correspondent of the journal made famous in American history by Horace Greeley. He went back to America, accredited to be a like ambassador between it and us, making it known to Fleet Street, as he had made us known from Fleet Street ; and that meant a worth-while good-bye talk.

It was an odd shock to find him, in appearance, curiously like an English coachman of the Victorian age, with, of course, every difference the moment he spoke. He was shaved bare, apart from splashes of close-cropped, darkish-grey hair, coming down to the end of the ear on each side of the face. That grooming was completed by a sharp-edged stand-up collar and a square-shaped tie, which even had the necessary pin, as large as a sixpence. It all gave you the impression of a man who had been fashioned in a horse-loving English shire and had never taken the trouble, or had been too busy, to make any change on himself.

Smalley, like his friend Henry James, had, as a result of his long residence here, become " English, quite English, you know," in some ways, but the American fabric of character remained. He was a

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fine, cultured example of the real, enduring spiritual and intellectual kinship of the Briton and the older American. Further, he was a witness to the constant growth, in his and our time, of that kinship, something better than any mere blood cousinship. Still further, he had a pretty story, gathered from his own experience, which he would tell in illustration of cousinly Anglo-Americanism.

He came to England in 1866, when America had still the embers of its great Civil War, and he came to let his countrymen know about the Austro-Prussian War, which ended with Sadowa. When he reached Queenstown, then and later a place of great importance in Transatlantic traffic, he heard of Austria's crushing defeat and Bismarck's history-shaping victory. Thus there was no war news for him to handle, but he realised what could be done here in the general collection of European news for America. He established a bureau for his paper, so starting the modern, big American news trail in Fleet Street, and, settling down in London, he wanted a furnished house.

An entry in one agent's list greatly tickled him, because, after giving particulars of a likely place, it said, warningly and with the patronisingly menace of a certain type of English nature, happily not so prevalent as it was, "No dogs or foreigners."

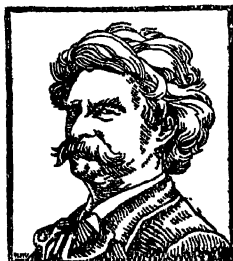
“ Ah,” he said, “ I’m afraid I’m not eligible for it ” ; to which the agent answered, “ Dear me, you’re not a foreigner, you’re an American. An American is never a foreigner in England.” He found that, and as for English prejudices—why not ? “ A good healthy prejudice—I like it ; it is part of the strength of the English people.”

Smalley was a natural diplomat, like every good journalist, and he was a sound contemporary historian, for, said he, “ The rapid, orderly march of democracy has been the outstanding phase of English national life in the final Victorian epoch.” He had also, one recalls, a conversational gift for the picturesque, like the remark, “ England lends itself to pageant. In America, only the mountains and rivers are old.”

When a still more famous American, Mark Twain, came to Oxford for his honorary degree, the old-world ceremony attending it pleased him almost as much as the tribute itself. He was, at sight, a picturesque figure, with his loose, yet graceful, body, his colourful and easy-fitting clothes, his kindly face, his heavy, grey moustache, his clear, light eyes and his surmounting soft felt or Panama hat. So he loved the gowns and the hats and the Latin orations of Oxford, and that day, in the old university town,

was one of the happiest, as it was one of the proudest, in his whole life. Also, according to precedent !

For he began it by saluting a gardener who was rolling a college lawn and asking, "How do you manage to get God's billiard-tables like this?" "Well," was the droned-out answer, "we begins



*Mark Twain, the famous American writer, who liked London and British folk and came here when he could ; for one thing that we might know him as a thinker ; not only a as world's humorist.*

hundreds of years ago, and we cuts close and we rolls heavy and steady. We cuts and rolls, and we rolls and cuts and we keeps cuttin' and rollin', as I'm rollin' ; and that's how we gets 'em, sir."

Mark Twain did not say this story was exaggerated, as, traditionally, he said that a report of his death was exaggerated. Nor did he, as apposite in another strain, cite the Chestertonian theory of the "rolling English road," and indeed he said

very little, even when he was put to the question. He was most natural and best when talking "off his own bat," without let or hindrance, though he could always be a silent and appreciative listener.

Old Andrew Chatto, who published many of Mark Twain's books in this country, once gave a lunch in token of their good friendship. It took place in a room over the then Chatto office and was quite informal, of the chop-and-cheese order, but delightfully interesting to those of us who were guests. Mark ate little, soon had his familiar corn-cob pipe going, and with it moved into an arm-chair in a corner of the room. There he smoked and talked about things great and small, for a couple of hours, and he was "left sitting" and talking, like the House of Commons.

One of Mark Twain's texts, the outcome, perhaps, of a remark by one of us, was the difficulty of comporting himself in this world as an established humorist, while he was naturally a man of gravity. He was that by temperament and demeanour, and the death of his wife was an abiding sorrow which emphasised his sombriety of spirit and sent it questing in other spheres.

Perhaps Samuel L. Clemens would have liked posterity to value him for his serious writings

rather than for his humour as Mark Twain. He thus, in a contrasting literary way, resembled our Thomas Hardy, who esteemed his "Dynasts" and the other poetry of his later years more than he did his famous novels of Wessex. May be the public view is usually sounder than the self-view, because it is impartial, and certainly it is so when it becomes the verdict of time and every man.

Colonel John Hay, the author of "Jim Bludso," had a little anecdote which linked Mark Twain and that spirited poem. "My old friend," he said in his room as American Ambassador here, "has always declared that there's a line in my poem which isn't good seamanship, or should we say rivermanship? Now Mark was once a Mississippi pilot and ought to know, but I have refused to admit his authority, because that would mean rewriting a verse, which I'm not going to do." He laughed and I understood, for he was not defiant of his friend's expert counsel, but hateful, like all writers, of going back on a job that has once been done and should be done with.

That talk with John Hay, among many talks when he was in London, is not easy to recall in detail, and though he spoke the questioned line, its words remain vague in one's memory. A consultation of the poem in a delightful English edition of



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his verse, which appeared while he was in London, suggests, however, that it was probably this :

*" I'll hold her nozzle agin' the bank  
Till the last galoot's ashore."*

Could Jim Bludso do that with the " Prairie Bell," or any other boat in trouble, on a river so swift and powerful as the Mississippi? Evidently Mark Twain, who was supposed to have taken his pen-name from that cry of the Mississippi pilots, thought it not possible, but allowed poetic licence to his old comrade.

Hay had read greatly and could quote happily, as when, being asked, on leaving London, " Aren't you sorry to go ? " he replied, " You know Samuel Johnson's ' The man who is tired of London is tired of life. ' " He also had a rich fund of anecdotage, much of it come of his own experiences, and some of it about that greatest of Americans, Abraham Lincoln. As a young man Hay had been one of Lincoln's secretaries, and after his death he was his joint-biographer. A Lincoln incident which he recalled on a morning that a Fleet Street wayfarer walked in on him, can hardly be in any biography.

Very important news was expected at the White House from General Grant, the result of a battle,

or of a critical move in the American Civil War. President Lincoln sat up waiting for it, and young Hay sat up with him, in case he should be needed, and others were of the company. There was general talk and particular talk, and out of something sprang a verse quotation which nobody could locate to its author. Search was made in books and reference books, without result, and then, when it was very late, and no dispatch had come from General Grant, everybody went to bed.

John Hay had hardly fallen asleep when there was a knock at his door, a fumbling at the handle, and next the appearance of a large, lean hand carrying a lighted candle. Presently a long, lanky figure, wearing a too short, white night-shirt, came through the door with an open book in its other hand. This was Abraham Lincoln, undefeatable even in tracking down a quotation, for "Damn it, Hay, I've found it," said he, flourishing the volume. He turned the candle-light on the open page of the book, read the verse in triumph, and marched off to his own quarters, while Hay probably whispered to himself, "Well, that's the most remarkable literary ghost I'll ever see."

One has another fresh and good Lincoln story which probably came from John Hay, but may not, because while records in print can always be checked,

those of the mind cannot. It must therefore speak for itself, and it can well do that, if only for its dramatic domestic interest. It brings in Mrs. Abraham Lincoln, who, as history whispers, didn't always say ditto to the President, there resembling Martha Washington and her English-like Gentleman George.

Between them those two ladies may have planted the seed of independence, which is to-day typical of the American woman, only a President, deep in some immediate affair of state, might not be thinking of that. At all events, it was dinner-time at the White House, and no doubt it dined then in the day-time, as was the early Victorian custom here, not at night. Lincoln had an important conference or a necessary piece of work to finish, and he forgot whatever announcement was equivalent to an English butler's "Dinner is served !"

Soon Mrs. "Abe" appeared to remind him, and, as he still lingered, talking or writing, she returned a second time and, perhaps, said what might be expected from a wife who knew the dinner was being ruined. Without a word, the six-foot Lincoln rose, lifted her from the floor in his strong arms, carried her outside the room, set her down in the corridor, re-entered and shut the door ; one more

example of the natural truth that great men may, on occasion, make impatient husbands.

But he was not impatient as a rule, on the contrary lamb-like, the records declare, with his somewhat shrewish Mary Todd and her scorching tongue. True, there is the anecdote of a boy asking him, when he was dressing for his wedding, "Where are you going?" and being answered, "To hell, I suppose." But there is also the other story of a friend complaining of Mrs. Lincoln's tongue, and her husband's comment: "I am sorry, but cannot you endure, for a few moments, what I have had for my portion these fifteen years?"

John Hay venerated Abraham Lincoln and would cite the famous oration at Gettysburg and its brief preparation, as an example of his fine thought, austere language and true eloquence. It was outlined hurriedly in a train on scraps of paper, as the President was travelling to Gettysburg to deliver it. What became of those scraps of paper? They would be worth a king's ransom to-day, when Lincoln has taken his place among the dozen greatest men of world history.

Another direct link with Abraham Lincoln, and one even more intimate to Fleet Street than Colonel John Hay, was George Haven Putnam, publisher, man of letters and delightful gentleman. If ever

there was an Ambassador of Letters between America and England it was he, for hardly a year passed, over half a century of time, without a visit on his part to London.

"Naturally," he remarked to me with his gentle smile, "for I was actually born in London, my parents being then resident here. At twenty-one I had the right to say whether I'd be an American citizen or a British subject. As it happened, I was in Libby Prison that birthday, having been captured by the Confederates, in our Civil War, and I quite forgot about the matter." But all his life he was a devoted friend of England and English literature and a rare champion of Anglo-American copyright. The Oxford honorary degree, conferred on him, as on Mark Twain, and other eminent Americans, was thus a most fitting imprint of our recognition and regard.

During what proved to be his last visit to London, George Haven Putnam took me with him to lunch at the urbane, dignified Athenæum Club. "Choose what you will," said he, "but as for me, I am more than eighty, so I must take heed what I eat. Moreover, before I left America, I securely locked up the set of false teeth which my family thought becoming to my age !"

A lunch thus begun was bound to be amusing,

even at the Athenæum, to which, as an unauthenticated story tells, a page-boy once went from the Sports Club. He returned in a week, seeking his old job again, and when asked why, said, "There ain't no fights down there on Sundays—only bishops!" George Haven Putnam smiled over that tale and went on to talk of many things, for his mind was rich in memories and knowledge, and he had a crisp sense of humour.

One of his amusing anecdotes had to do with Mrs. Florence Barclay, the author of "The Rosary" and other popular stories, when she visited her publishers and friends, the Putnams, in America. They were all staying at the sea-side, and bathing came into the programme, and Mrs. Barclay said she would like to swim with the others. Not knowing whether she was anything of a swimmer, and anxious she should run no risk, George Haven thought he would come along with the party as a sort of emergency escort and life-saving man.

He had just got into his bathing suit, preparatory for the part, when he saw Mrs. Barclay plunge into the sea and strike out strongly, waving her hand as much as to say, "Won't you come with me for a real swim, right out?" "She was a splendid swimmer," said he, "and it was a very humble

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water knight who was left lamenting on the beach, but we all laughed over the little comedy."

There are particular Americans, as there are particular Britons, whose names should live, apart from their other achievements, for what they have done to maintain and stimulate the fraternity of the two countries as a guiding force in modern civilisation. Undoubtedly George Haven Putnam ranks among them, though, of course, in a different way from American Ministers and Ambassadors to London, like Russell Lowell, Phelps, Bayard, John Hay or Choate. It was Choate who ranked another man with them when he said, "Henry White keeps an American diplomatic school in London where he trains green ambassadors."

For ever so many years Henry White was First Secretary to the American Ambassadors, and he might almost be described as the first regular diplomat, as distinguished from politicians and statesmen, of the American Republic. Later in life he was Ambassador for his country on the Continent, especially in Paris, where, as in London, he had troops of friends, and he wound up his service on the American delegation to the Versailles Conference. He had a born gift for diplomacy, but President Taft, when he came to office, put a spoke in it, and there is an odd story attached to that.

Earlier Judge Taft, as he then was, and Mrs. Taft were in London, and they wanted to hear an important debate in the House of Commons. It was not, apparently, possible to get tickets of admission, and instead Henry White sent them permits to visit the Royal Stables at Buckingham Palace ! Very innocently, no doubt, desirous only to be helpful somehow, as the other thing could not be managed, but, so the story goes, Taft took the happening as an affront and, at the White House, remembered it.

May be it is just a tale, for President Taft was a big man, in character as well as a giant, physically, in girth and weight. Thanks to James Bryce, when he was British Ambassador to America, I saw him at Washington, hopeful of getting something to write about. But he turned questioner, asked me all about the London papers and then said a most friendly " Good morning." It was a blazing hot forenoon, and I wondered how, with his many-stoned stoutness, he could be so cool and keen. Somebody afterwards told me that he overcame the heat by having an ice-box under his great arm-chair, but that also may have been only a yarn.



## X. THE MAN BEHIND THE VEIL

*Real human nature hidden under the trappings of public life ; here caught in small-talk of Joseph Chamberlain as " Joe," the Premier Earl of Rosebery as Scotland's darling and the Earl of Balfour as himself.*

ONE often hears the remark, " Oh, we have no great statesmen nowadays," and generally it is made by elderly people. Naturally, because they remember the Gladstones and the Beaconsfields, and their esquires the Roseberys and the Balfours, as an earlier generation remembered the Palmerstons and the Peels.

Is it that fewer men are born to be great in statesmanship, that the necessary gifts are different and less monumental, or that, in a swifter era and a more crowded arena, individual stature cannot assert itself, particularly if the general standard of intellectual life is far higher ? Verbal chronicles handed down in Fleet Street about Palmerston and Peel suggest that, as robust minds and strong characters, they were advantageously set in the picturesqueness of the hustings. No doubt

"Dizzy," in his young days, also suited the same stage because he was dramatic in temperament and florid in costume, a natural actor, with the world for audience.

What a pity that half a dozen Fleet Street men who had grown old in the Eighteen-Nineties and older when the Nineteen-Hundreds came, did not sit down together and write their experiences of mid-Victorian times. They could have made a wonderful "*Noctes Ambrosianæ*" from the historical materials they had worked among, and now and then they did let fall a surprising tale or a humorous anecdote. But Fleet Street is essentially the recording angel of the passing hour, and its practitioners catch that atmosphere and let bygones be bygones.

The big, outer world therefore gets from it no tablets graven with Victorian or other images, and indeed a will-o'-the-wisp, with a hand-to-mouth circulation, is the right, exquisite thing ; a Peter Pan spirit in a kingdom of print. Ghosts of other kinds have been known there and have been "laid," but who would shackle this silent voice of one age carrying into another, life and death on the march ? For Fleet Street has also had its incarnations and, if you please, its reincarnations.

Statesmen of the stiffish period when Victorians were becoming Edwardians could hardly, perhaps,

be expected to know that, and post-war statesmen have themselves been too busy writing newspaper articles to make the discovery. A sharp contrast and a sharp corner here, because once on a time a responsible statesman must not know Fleet Street, or he would be thought undignified, even indiscreet ; while now a statesman, out of his own job, turns to Fleet Street and journalism, though that phase of " Name, please ? " as the recommendation of articles, has sensibly abated.

Always, however, the powerful statesman and the powerful editor, be they who they might be, have ploughed the same furrow, public opinion, and therefore they have signalled to each other from the turrets of Whitehall and Fleet Street. Apart from that, there has been the necessary traffic between the man of action in national affairs and the plain journalist engaged in his work, and personal impressions and anecdotage have thus been garnered.

For example, the clean-shaven face and clear-cut figure of Joseph Chamberlain, at his prime, are in a picture which a certain Fleet Street hand is wont to draw from personal memory and, perhaps, embellish, for that is in the day's art. When the conflicts around Irish Home Rule were raging, Chamberlain visited the Scottish Highlands and Islands seeking light on the Crofter Question. Earlier, at

## A HIGHLAND LAMENT

Inverness, he had set the heather alight with the latent fire of a verse from the "Canadian Boat Song," a touching, haunting coronach of the Scottish Highlander banished across the Atlantic, so that sheep and deer might tenant his native hills :

*"From the lone shieling of the misty island,  
Mountains divide us, and the waste of seas ;  
Yet still the blood is strong, the heart is Highland,  
And we in dreams behold the Hebrides."*

Possibly it was this citation of his that gave the poem its modern vogue, because, when he made it, "Joe," next to Gladstone, had the listening ear of the country. Strangely enough, we have, even now, arrived at no surety as to who wrote the poem in the old number of "Blackwood's Magazine," where it first saw the light, but perhaps "Christopher North" is the most likely author. If, however, you want to know the full history of the mystery, then you have only to get Lord Francis Hervey's book on it, "The Lone Shieling."

With Chamberlain, to the Highlands and Islands, went his amiable, faithful friend Jesse Collings, famous then for his prescription that the happy, rural family should have "three acres and a cow." "Joe" and "Jesse" were far more sincerely attached to each other than the Samuel Johnson and

James Boswell of Fleet Street, who made an earlier Highland tour, and indeed they were comrades by disposition as well as in politics, as anybody could see.

A certain meeting of Skye crofters fell to be addressed. The place of it was miles distant from Portree, the dainty little capital of the island, and there was only one "machine," as they say in Scotland, to make the journey. The roads were not only bad but hilly, and the fewer the passengers the better, so Chamberlain advised the attending reporters to remain comfortably in Portree, and he and Jesse Collings would, when they returned, tell them what happened at the meeting.

They came back, late in the evening, tired and wet, for it rains often and very generously in the Hebrides. But Chamberlain would not rest, would not even change his clothes, until he had kept his promise, because the wires to Fleet Street waited. He sat down in the parlour of the hotel, ordered something hot to drink, lit his familiar cigar and put his single eyeglass in his eye. Then, turning occasionally to Jesse Collings for a point, he dictated an admirable account of his meeting with the crofters, what he said to them and what they said to him. He found them alert politicians with, naturally, their mind keenly on their own crofter affairs, and he liked them.

It was not the habit then to let decorative small incidents into grave newspaper reports, but Chamberlain had a keen sense of the humour of some of his encounters in Skye. He was amused when told about one aged Highlander who was violently Home Rule, and so an antagonist. Said this patriarch, speaking in the figurative language of the Covenanters: "I've nothing personal against Mr. Chamberlain, who seems a respectable Englishman, and he can't help that, but I wish the Lord would translate him!" The idea of going to Heaven in a cloud, like the Prophet Elijah, tickled Chamberlain, and a quiet smile also gathered round his thin lips and firm mouth, when crofter after crofter would address him as "My Lord Chamberlain."

It was John Morley who said that Chamberlain had a genius for friendship, and certainly he showed it in his affability to newspaper men. They also approved him as a speaker, for he never was inaudible, and his English, like himself, was compact and crisp. He had emotion, but he kept it well hidden, and he had sentiment, as a Dickens lover should, though he let it out more in his private friendships than in his public relationships. His most effective speeches had a quality of cool analysis to which the orchid he was in the habit of wearing seemed to give the other, opposed, quality of colour.

The finish suggested by the orchid, extended to the close-fitting morning coat and the nicely hanging grey trousers, and of course to evening dress, in which "Joe," unlike some of his political contemporaries and successors, looked handsomely at home, because it suited him.

Every good speaker has his own way of "getting over," and Chamberlain's lay in debate, not in rhetoric or in oratory. He dropped his meaning into the ears of an audience with the clearness of water running from a spring well. He spoke in stages, as it were, first indicating certain thoughts and then expounding them, and a speech of successive waves in that manner was not only easy for an audience but easy to report. That was a Fleet Street asset of high value in the "verbatim" 'Nineties and Nineteen-Hundreds, when people did read speeches, or, at all events, got lots of them to read.

It also belonged to "Gladstone's Lord Rosebery," as that many-sided nobleman was saluted during the historic Midlothian Campaigns, which saw him enter prominently on a career that eventually led to the Premiership. How affectionately one remembers Edinburgh when the Laird of Dalmeny was that to it and its public orator, rather than My Lord Rosebery.

The ancient capital was very fond of him ; his

Byronic face, his not tall but elegant figure and his friendly, democratic air, set in a patrician disposition. It was also proud of him, not merely for himself, but for the "renascence of wonder," as Theodore Watts-Dunton would have said, which he brought back to "mine own romantic town," so much flattery of history.

His eloquence was an echo of the great Scots pulpit orators and his language an echo of Sir Walter's romance and of Stevenson's music in words. Edinburgh had found a voice which could express her and the country of which she is still the capital, though she may not be its metropolis. A glowing page that, of modern Scotland, and Gladstone, the Scotsman, was the occasion for it, though as much may not have struck him amidst urgent affairs.

It was then, if ever, that England might have lost Scotland, for if the Laird of Dalmeny had called she would have denounced the Act of Union and set up again by herself. Do not, of course, think literally like that, because nobody ever had such a thought then, and not very many have it now. Yet at one time Lord Rosebery's hold on the heart and mind of Scotland was so great, and, apparently, so inevitable, that, had he been in rebel mood, he could have cried, "Up wi' the bonnets o' Bonnie



Dundee " and heard the answer, " Scots, wha hae wi' Wallace bled ! "

With what quick humour and glancing wisdom would he have rebuked this vision, had it been chaffingly addressed to him by somebody in an after-dinner speech. He was no born rebel or dictator, no cave-man with intellect, but at such a speech he was so perfect that the records of Fleet Street put him beyond praise, at least in one case. It was the case of a scribe forgetting to take a note of Lord Rosebery's speech, because he became fascinated with it and merely listened.

This recalls a story of his countryman, Robert Burns, when he went to Edinburgh and found himself lionised by its great folk ; and possibly it is quite as true. The Ayrshire Poet conversed with such brilliance that nobody of the company, not even the Duchess of Gordon, could afterwards recall what he said. Well, repetition is a law of nature, and it may also apply to after-dinner speeches, when the dinners are good enough.

Perhaps, however, dinners are best, certainly most enjoyable, when there are no speeches, as behold, in reproduction, a souvenir of how Her Majesty's Government dined and wined at Greenwich, on August 15th, 1894, when Lord Rosebery was Premier :

## Vins.

Ponché  
à la Romaine  
E I. Madeira

Rudesheimer  
Berg Cabinet  
vint 1868  
Leiden

Still Moselle  
vint 1857  
Leiden

Sorbét  
à la Française

Pommery and  
Greno  
Tres Sec.  
vint. 1884

Pfungst, Extra  
Special, vint. 1880

G. H. Mumms  
Extra dry  
vint. 1884

Irroy Carte D'or  
vint. 1878

Reginaris  
Frappé

Liqueurs

Chateau Lafite  
vint. 1874  
Cockburn's Port  
vint. 1863

Brown Sherry  
vint. 1865

Café

## MENU

TORTUE CLAIRE ET TORTUE LIÉE      GRAS VERTS AU JUS  
AILERONS DE TORTUE ETUVÉE AUX FINES HERBES EN MADERF

CARRELETS SOUCHÉ

WHITEBAIT

RISSOLES DE HOMARD      PETITES SOLES FRITES

OMELETTE DE CRABE AU CORDON BLEU

ANGUILLES ETUVÉE À LA BORDELAISE

TRUITE GRILLÉE SAUCE À LA TARTARE

ROUGE ET NOIR

KARI DE CREVETTES AU RIZ

SAUMON À LA NORVÉGIENNE

HANCHE DE VENAISON ET HARICÔTS VERTS

COQ DE BRUYERE RÔTIS ET POMMES DE TERRE FRITS

JAMBON GRILLÉE À LA DIABLE AU POIS ET SALADE DE TOMATE

CHARLOTTE AU FRAMBOISES

DAMES D'HONNEUR      PETITES ECLAIRE AU CHOCOLAT

LAITANCES DE MAQUEREAU AU CROUTES

GLACES

CRÈME D'ANANAS      CRÈME AUX FRAISES

EAU DE GROSEILLE      EAU DE CERISES

Dessert.

ANANAS, MELONS, PÊCHES, NECTARINES, FRAISES, RAISINS

FIGUES VERTS, CONSERVES.

The Ship, Greenwich.

Of old Governments went down the Thames by boat to dine at the Ship or the Trafalgar. Lord Rosebery and his colleagues revived this custom for the last time, so showing they could be a happy company socially, if not so happy politically. You see, they had more than the usual Cabinet antagonisms, with the fortunate, proud, temperamental Premier in the Lords, and the valiant, not unnaturally disappointed Sir William Harcourt leading the Commons.

Personally, Lord Rosebery could be very charming as talker or speaker, and when occasion presented itself he would bring in the "gentlemen of the Press" in the friendliest way. What a dreadful term that was ; as if there could not be "gentlemen of the Press ?" It has gone out of use and out of meaning, but the old English Squire did hug it fondly as a half-way something between him and unrespectability. The old town or country lady embraced it as almost a slogan to intemperate desires, for "My dear, you never know who these fellows are, and they come into our homes, our drawing-rooms, nay, almost our bedrooms !"

That once possible version of the "Gentlemen of the Press" would have sent Lord Rosebery into the impetuous laughter which he rarely permitted to a naturally impetuous Scotsman. But to be

## “DEAD SEA FRUIT”

definitely anecdotal, there was a Scots member of the brotherhood who had often sat under him and who could sing a song with the best of amateurs. The Laird of Dalmeny always called on him, and one of his notes of thanks read, “ I have listened to you with far more pleasure than you, I’m afraid, have ever listened to me.”

It was that penman, or another equally observant, who said that the gaiety of Lord Rosebery’s nature stood still when he lost his wife, and that it never bloomed as well again. High prizes in every range of life fell to him, but they were as “ Dead Sea fruit,” because she was not alive to share them, and his sorrow was too sensitive for him to share it with the world. There is always the one to whom it is not necessary to talk, who just understands. That is the perfection of companionship, as old friendship, which knows and excuses everything, is the perfection of friendship.

Fleet Street’s acquaintance with statesmen and other celebrities is not confined to public occasions, for they often, especially in recent, democratic years, come to it as guests. It has its own social side, outstretched to the highest quarters and accepted there, and in a modest tavern you may, if you be one of the elect, hear Mr. Stanley Baldwin enlarging on the joys of Worcestershire, or Mr. Ramsay

MacDonald praising Lossiemouth. These excursions to Fleet Street are without alarms because there are "no reporters present" and everything is absolutely "masonic."

Lord Balfour once found such ease and freedom in these conditions that he made a speech so revealing nationally and internationally, yet so modest personally, that it will long linger silently in the minds of those who heard it. It was all about another speech which he delivered at Washington, and on the floor of Congress, a rare honour in itself. That speech had to do with the relationships of England and America in a naval sense, and its results have been in the making of history.

It was an intellectual treat to hear the Earl of Balfour when he was at his best, because you got thought and speech in perfect union. Almost you might say you saw him think, so clearly did his tongue give expression to his mind, for he rarely prepared his speeches. He trusted to the hour and to the mood, and that was characteristic of his nature, which held a wonderful charm and yet could change to the cool, polished detachment of a guillotine knife. But let us, in a hitherto unwritten anecdote of him when he was Chief Secretary for Ireland, show what he could be in courage and kindness.

He was then the "Bloody Balfour" of the Irish

Home Rulers, who later came to like him in as gallant a manner as he liked them. Plots for his confusion and destruction were frequent, and late one night there came rumour of one to a London newspaper office. A member of the staff who knew Mr. Arthur Balfour, as untitled he was, went down to Carlton Gardens to ask him about it. He rang the front-door bell, but there was no immediate answer, and indeed everybody seemed to be in bed. He rang again, and presently he heard a shuffling of feet and a turning of keys, as if some ghost were unchaining itself and proceeding to walk.

Next the front door slowly opened and behind it stood a tall, loose figure wearing an old dressing-gown and red slippers and carrying a candle in one hand and an open novel in the other. "Hullo ——" it said ; " you at this hour of the morning. What's up ? " The visitor from Fleet Street explained, and Mr. Arthur Balfour said cheerily, " A plot to blow me up ! Oh, that's all, is it ? Come in, and we'll have a Scotch whisky and talk it over."

He was a Scotsman, with other folds begotten of being half an English Cecil, and that, in years to come, may land his biographers in pages of analysis. It may help them over the assessment of this or t'other if they remember, beside his "dazzling charm" and his "freezing silence," that he played

golf and tennis well, that he liked music and good talk, and that his Arthurian presence and touch were as a lamp among an association of kindred spirits whom Victorians knew, Edwardians remembered, and Georgians wonder about as "The Souls."

## XI. GLADSTONE THE GREAT

*Seeing and hearing the "Grand Old Man" in public and in private, thus getting a near portrait of his majestic, dominating personality ; and being at Hawarden when he lay dying, the heroic "Happy Warrior."*

Nobody born since Gladstone died, can quite understand how extraordinarily he filled England, Scotland and Ireland for his contemporaries, whether they were with him or against him. He was a Presence without whom the nation did not let itself think and a personality whose influence made itself felt even in the intimate lives of the people. Not often, in our island story of great men and high deeds, has there been a finer human epic than he was, and Fleet Street gave me many gleams of that epic, with a moving drama as it closed.

Nay, if someone asked, "What experience most deeply imprinted itself on you, as a London journalist?" my instant answer would be, "Being at Hawarden when Gladstone lay dying." There were a score of us or more, all not only "Specials," but



men of tried and particular qualities. Necessarily, for attendance upon death needs a spiritual feeling of reverence and a worldly sense of delicacy ; and not only the home-land but the whole world, watched beside Gladstone's sick-bed in the month of May of the year Eighteen-ninety-eight.

Ours was the duty of telling, from day to day and night to night, how the tense battle between life and death went, and the ordeal was no small one. It was a duty understood within the exquisite home at which we were so many pickets, but that merely added to its sensitive difficulty. Only the good fellowship among us could overcome all things and make them seemly in the midst of deep and tender family sorrow.

How vividly that thought recalls a strange scene, set in a sort of Hawarden Castle boot-hall, where a fire burned to keep the news-watchers warm. There two of them sat, on a long, wooden form, with their arms about each other's necks, holding themselves from falling, as they slumbered rather than slept. Constantly they had been rivals in Fleet Street, even, perhaps, a little more, and yet here they now were, allies in adversity, before a fire which flickered and spluttered queer, uncanny lights and shadows about them.

A Rembrandt might have painted the weird

scene, or a Dante or a Goethe might have rendered, in words, its atmosphere of comedy set in tragedy, all making irony. Not one of "life's little ironies," but the mortal and immortal irony which we helplessly call eternity. It might have been a parable play around poor humanity, unconcernedly flattened out by exhausted nature, on sentinel-go with the Angel of Death.

A valiant octogenarian—not out ! That had been Gladstone in the first years of his retirement from politics, and he and Catherine Gladstone still played together like child lovers, and sang as Darby and Joan, "My heart is true to Poll," or their favourite chorus, "A ragamuffin husband and a rantipolin' wife."

"P.M. singing 'My 'art is true to Poll' all the eve," we have the record in the diaries of their youngest daughter, Mary Gladstone ; or "P.M. in such spirits he sang 'My heart is true to Poll' all thro' dinner" ; or, still more adorable, "I was in my room at 9.30 and heard him and Mama coming up the stairs singing 'A ragamuffin husband and a rantipolin' wife' at the top of their voices."

How lovely married love had been for them, all the long time, and how sweetheartly and motherly she had been to him, as one had frequently seen with one's own eyes. It was a muffler produced from

somewhere, lest he should catch cold, the glasses which, but for her, would have been forgotten at home, or the lotion he sipped during a speech, to keep his throat supple and resonant. It consisted of egg and sherry, compounded by Mrs. Gladstone, and carried to speech-makings with the guarding care which she gave him in all things.

She had, as we now know, had a broken engagement before the young Gladstone asked her hand and she said to him, "I can only give you half a heart." "My dear," he answered, "I will make it a whole one," and how fully he did that the mere onlooker could see in the soft bloom of her face, as she watched him making a speech.

What a speaker ! His unusually broad shoulders bespoke lungs that, in his prime, yielded billows of sound, emotionally delightful to the ear. That had been the discovery of a Scots boy, drawn with all the countryside, to the Deeside station of Aboyne, where Gladstone stopped for a few moments on his way to Braemar in the far, wondering Eighteen-Eighties.

His lion head, suggestive of the Lion's Head peak of a familiar Braemar hill, was silhouetted in the railway carriage, and he bent it in courteous recognition of a rapturous crowd. For in Scotland, instinctively brotherly, and proud of it, Gladstone

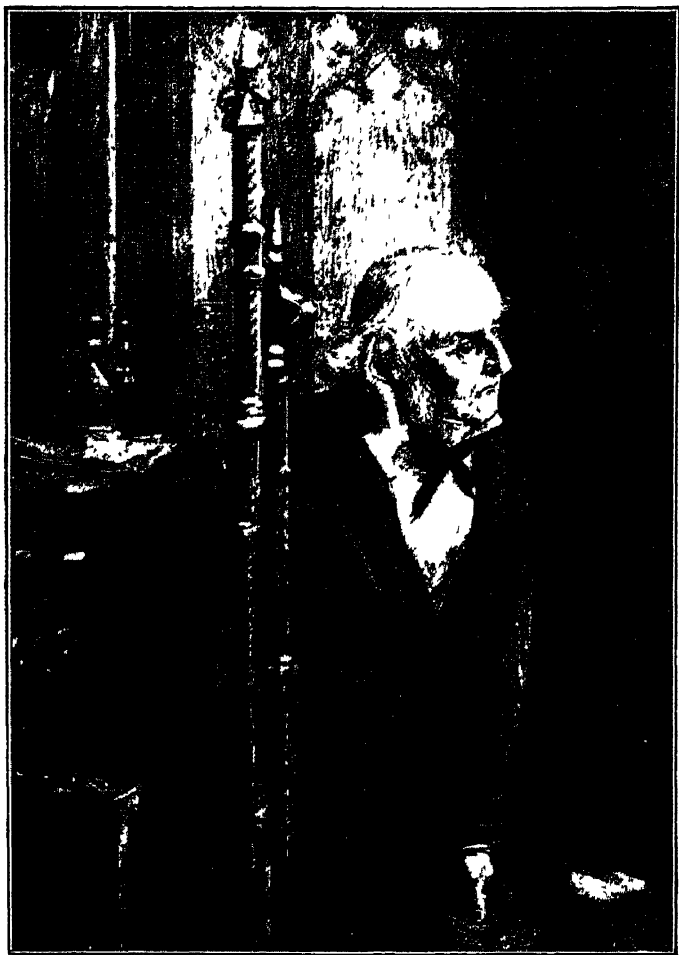
was the Scot, as well as then king, a two-fold fact which told with the people. He could not well remain silent with such infecting warmth about him, and doubtless there was a private understanding between the crowd and the engine-driver, that the train should not move on until the "Grand Old Man" did say something. He did not say much, but he said it from the opened door of his carriage, with such a melody of voice that one hardly noticed what he did say.

Years afterwards I was to hear that voice, again and again, in the House of Commons, on the political platform, at various meetings, and in the drawing-room of Hawarden Castle itself. A certain hoarseness grew upon it, when it tired, but always it kept its bell-like note, its texture of music and its persuasive command. In conversation it would ring like silver and move, like quick-silver, with animation, and then there would be the courteous wait for a reply, with one hand held shell-fashion to the ear, a help to some deafness. The eyes were still shining lights in the large lined face which ruffled mobility to every passing thought, as a lake ruffles to a breeze. More, he actually and literally had eyes which flashed out of their darkness, like an eagle's, so that you could follow their flashes, count them, feel them, when he was deeply stirred.

Never a tall man, Gladstone yet looked it, and in the throes of a speech he was not only uplifted mentally and spiritually but physically. He had a body of such elastic elegance and a countenance of such fine bravery, that you thought of ancient Greek statues. Dignity was his by nature, but it was supple and gracious, not haughty, although, when provoked, he could blaze and strike. His whole personality helped to make him "a constant influence, a peculiar grace," and "the happy warrior every man in arms should hope to be." Above everything, he had courage ; courage to risk and do, courage in the battle, courage in victory and courage in defeat, as when, after a General Election, he said to his youngest son : " Well, Herbert, my dear old boy, we have had a drubbing and no mistake."

" Be inspired," he once laid it down in his gospel of conduct, " with the belief that life is a great and honourable calling, not a mean and grovelling thing that we are to struggle through as best we can."

That elevated note of living and teaching was the ultimate secret of his lasting sovereignty with the British people, for true greatness rests on character more than on anything else. His gravely proud nature would never stoop to a petty thing, but always took the straight road, the ascending road, the high



*Sidney P Hall*

*By courtesy of "The Graphic"*

*Gladstone in the House of Commons*



road. Thus he walked unafraid, in the bright face of danger, because he walked in what was very real to him, the simple faith and near guidance of God.

His religion was part of his being, but no achieving man can be without armour, and no doubt Gladstone's had its chinks, for enemies, as a fine landscape has folds for the imperfect traveller. Never, though, was it aught but the shining panoply of splendid purpose, directed by lofty ideals and the battering-ram brain of the first great humanitarian statesman.

His noble magnanimity had often been a “soul under the ribs of death,” to the nation, and as he lay dying at Hawarden, Wordsworth might have been passing through Grasmere, where he learned of the impending death of an earlier paladin of liberty, Charles James Fox, and wrote “Loud is the Vale” :

*“ And many thousands now are sad—  
Wait the fulfilment of their fear ;  
For he must die, who is their stay,  
Their glory disappear.*

*A Power is passing from the earth  
To breathless Nature's dark abyss ;  
But when the Mighty pass away  
What is there more than this—*



## GLADSTONE THE GREAT

*That Man, who is from God sent forth,  
Doth yet again to God return ?—  
Such ebb and flow must ever be,  
Then wherefore should we mourn ? ”*

True, but a magnificent presence was about to depart, to become dumb for ever more, and there was almost a crisis of public dismay as well as of personal affection. Who in the commonwealth could fill the place of this elder statesman, so grand mentally, morally, spiritually, that he had become a veritable pillar of it ? Nobody.

It was as if Macaulay's New Zealander sat on a broken arch of London Bridge and sketched the ruins of St. Paul's. No words, marshal them as one may, can fully convey the depth and spread and multitude of Gladstone's roots, in Victorian soil. He was like a great, old English oak that had withstood the blasts of the ages and tamed them ; a monarch of the forest, such as even he, in the heyday of his axe, could scarcely have cut down. But all this was so intimate as to be almost oppressive that night, at Hawarden Castle, when we heard he was not likely to see another dawn.

He had fought the fight against growing illness, as he had fought every good fight all his life, with a vibrant resolution, a perfect faith, and a beautiful

patience. He had taught his fellow-men and women how to live, and when he could no longer do that he was teaching them how to die. His nobility of character and his resources of heart and spirit had for half a century been equal to every hazard of fate. But the heavy wrinkles in the curiously marble pallor of the face had deepened into valleys of shadow, the scant, silvery hair had almost thinned away, the glorious voice had sunk to a whisper, and the patriarchal figure itself was worn to a shadow by cruel suffering which the doctors could only relieve, not conquer. So, after rallies which were almost heroic, a gentle cloud of unconsciousness descended upon the Grand Old Warrior, and it became his winding-sheet on a day most sacred to him—Ascension Day.

Ascension Eve, May 19, 1898, at Hawarden Castle ! One's mind is a clear diary about it, and it resembled a diary in noting, as shreds and patches, things which afterwards became the whole. Several of us, to lighten the hours of watching and waiting, took a walk in Hawarden Park, the Gladstone demesne, about when night and morning were to meet. That is always an hour of change and portent, for one day is dying and gathers its ceremonies as another day is being born, bridal and hopeful.

The stars in the heavens were winking at each other with rare brightness, and doused lights, steadier than the flickering candles which hurt Gladstone's eyes when he was studying at Oxford, were burning in the three-windowed sick-room of the castle. A lonely, wild bird cried plaintively somewhere, and that struck our tired but strung nerves as an omen of something about to happen.

For many hours Gladstone's life had been hovering between the two worlds, this where it had done so much, the other which had no terrors for it but a Hail after a Farewell. The fine simile of his old friend, John Bright, at the outbreak of the Crimean War, suggested itself, for the wings of the Angel of Death, if they could not be heard beating, were surely sailing the heavens.

While we, outside in Hawarden Park, wondered, the members of the Gladstone family within the house, had gathered for the parting. The wife and mother, weary with the long vigil at the sick-bed, and heart-laden with grief, sat beside her husband, holding his hand, now pressing it, now kissing it. Her son the Vicar of Hawarden read litanies and said prayers, in which the other members of the group silently joined. It was the Calvary and the Ascension which have been the road of Christian mankind, in cottage or in hall, ever poignant, now

illustrious yet simple, for death is a one-way end to all human pilgrimages.

As the dawn came, Gladstone's breathing, which had been so low and faint as hardly to be perceptible, became laboured. Nothing of a struggle, but a kind of gradual going, as if, in his soul, he still would sing the hymn, on which he had dwelt so much, "Praise to the Holiest in the height." It was a favourite hymn with him, and, like all our individually favourite hymns, went back to his early life, for it spoke of John Henry Newman and the Oxford Movement.

Perhaps mental consciousness had not wholly fled, because earlier he had muttered "Amen," his last word on this earth. As five o'clock a.m. chimed softly on the clocks of Hawarden Castle, he gave two slight gasps and died, his arms clasped across his breast, and "Peace, perfect peace" on his face. A noble passing, for which the world held its breath, saying in the Scriptural challenge, "Oh, death, where is thy sting?"

What a superb face Gladstone's remained in death, for we saw that, with the privilege of making obeisance to the mortal remains of this immortal. It was notably thinner, a fact which added emphasis to its strong line from forehead to chin, though the dropt eyelids shut the

windows from which genius had so often flashed and so often conquered.

Yet the old grandeur was all there ; in the contour of the profile as I once saw him reading in his Temple of Peace and lost to the outer world ; in the spacious, massive brow, bastion of a head memorable among all human heads ; and in the concentrated general expression of the countenance, shuttered, but glowing with the embers of a life's captaincy. "Most noble and grand did Papa look," wrote Mary Gladstone about him, on some living occasion, and it was as true in death.

"Mr. Gladstone," said the physicians, in their last bulletin, "passed peacefully away at five o'clock this morning." His face, in its last repose, so told of peace, after the pain he had borne, that he might just have fallen asleep, but it also had another, different testimony. It had a stamp of resolve and masterfulness which, one might fancy, had several times thrown back the Angel of Death, saying he would only be received on terms of compromise ; a Gladstonian victory over the flesh, over even the grave awaiting in Westminster Abbey.

This fancy, as increased tribute to a knight of all the courages, I ventured to confide to John Viscount Morley, during a conversation I had with him in subsequent years, partly around the hero of his

famous "Gladstone." "Yes," ventured I, "one night, looking on that tender, yet stern and combative dead face, almost have thought the Grand Old Warrior kept death, though due, at bay until Ascension Day, in order to be in its glorious company." Morley glanced at me with as much wondering curiosity as ever got into his ascetic face and then, as if seeking its opinion, at the Italian *Penseroso* on the mantelpiece of his study at Wimbledon Common. Finally, may be recalling Gladstone's "J. Morley is, on the whole, about the best stay I have," he turned to me with a quiet, amused, but grave and understanding smile and said, "A most interesting theory, but impossible of proof."

As Gladstone's biographer, and as an old Fleet Street man, Morley also listened with quiet interest to a little story new to him, as it will be to others, affecting the "Grand Old Man's" burial in Westminster Abbey. The nation took it for granted that he could only lie there and was puzzled when, following his death, no immediate announcement of this was made. The silence also intrigued the newspaper correspondents at Hawarden, and happening to meet a member of the Gladstone family, I mentioned it to him.

"Oh," said he, "my father's will provides

absolutely that he and my mother must rest together, and I suppose the Abbey authorities are wondering whether they can spare the room for both."

A key to the enigma, and it went swiftly to Fleet Street, not only an exclusive and valuable bit of news, but a word in the ear of public opinion. It instantly exclaimed, "Of course William Ewart Gladstone and Catherine Gladstone shall be together in death, as they were together in life, and they shall lie together in Westminster Abbey."

Next time you go there, enter the venerable house by the Western Door and walk up the aisle until you come to a stone into which there is cut the one word "Gladstone"; their united and inseparable legacy to mankind.

## XII. "FATHERS" OF THE HOUSE

*Personal memories by them of English Parliamentary life, and its changes, in our own time ; and descriptions of Brougham, Palmerston, Peel, Melbourne, Canning, Cobden, O'Connell, Disraeli, Gladstone, Parnell and other famous statesmen.*

A MAN who has been long enough in the House of Commons to become its "Father," should have interesting things to tell us. It means he has been an M.P. continuously for more years than any brother member and, in cases, a Minister, or even Premier, like Mr. Lloyd George, who succeeded Mr. T. P. O'Connor in this Parliamentary fathership. Our concern here is with earlier, but also modern, "Fathers" and with their impressions and anecdote, as gathered in talks I had with them.

At Cadogan Gardens, by Sloane Street, there once lived the Right Honourable Charles Pelham Villiers, M.P., and "Father" of the Commons for so long that he had almost been forgotten. He was a link with the Unreformed Parliament, and so,



before he died in the late 'Nineties, he could look back on whole pages of English history. He did that sitting in an easy chair by his fireside, white-haired, fragile and shrunk, but still keen-eyed and mentally alert.

His face had the remains of manly English good looks, his fingers, with which he lightly drummed his knees to emphasise a point, remained muscular, if gnarled, and his whole air was aristocratic. It was as if a “ stately home ” of England had become weather-worn, but was still inhabited by an old family. His name proclaimed the old English family to which he belonged, and he was not only “ Father ” of a democratic House of Commons, but father, with Richard Cobden, of Free Trade.

It was himself, he said quite simply and without any sort of boast, who “ exhumed ” Cobden from the industrial world of the north. He could not, ask as he would, find anybody in the Reform Club who could tell him about this apostolic northerner. Their political views seemed to correspond, so, going to Rochdale, he sought him out, and they joined forces in the campaign for Free Trade.

Cobden was a happy and persuasive speaker, more a “ facts ” speaker than John Bright, but equally effective on the platform or in the House of Commons. Personally, Cobden was spruce,

business-like, well dressed, while Bright was Quakerish, and indeed, when he entered the House of Commons, wore Quaker dress. He did that in loyalty to Quaker tradition and in deference to his father, and only gave it up some time after his father's death.

A peg in the mind of the aged Villiers held a clear picture of the relations of especial friendship and sympathy which united Gladstone and John Bright. When they definitely separated on Irish Home Rule, after a forlorn-hope talk of two hours, "I never saw Bright so excited. He could not understand what had brought Gladstone to it all, but neither of them faltered, much as they suffered in losing each other." A moment's silence followed this memory, as if it still held pain for a mutual friend and comrade.

To speak of Beaconsfield from the beginning, was to go farther back, and what Villiers said was admiration with qualification. "Disraeli? A great Parliamentarian, but there was much fustian about his speeches." The effect of this on the House was emphasised by "Dizzy's" weakness, in his younger days, for "fancy dress," and that memory recalled the other of his challenge in so many words: "You may not hear me now, but the day is coming when you will have to listen to me." Villiers heard this challenge and defiance and said

it was the reply to much quizzical asking which had gone on, “ What’s Benjamin going to do ? ”

The homely colloquialism of that phrase pierces the curtain of a century or so of time, and other vivid little Parliamentary lights were also found burning in Cadogan Gardens. “ Ten speeches in a night,” once exclaimed Joseph Hume—“ where are we going ? ” “ I’ve lived long enough,” commented Villiers, “ to find the public pleased when a man makes a good speech in Parliament, as if his so doing were a surprise. Of old, good speeches were expected, and it’s come to this, I fancy ; more speeches, fewer orators.” No orator was Lord John Russell, but there was a remembered deliverance by him when something new was proposed : “ We can’t have a revolution every year.”

Probably the Duke of Wellington would have said ditto to that, as a too modest Parliamentary candidate said “ ditto to Mr. Burke.” Anyhow, Villiers could quote him as saying about his iron shutters at Hyde Park Corner : “ Yes, there they remain ; the mob would do it again.” And there they remain to-day, as you will see if you look at Apsley House from the Hyde Park side.

Nobody, Villiers emphasised, who did not live at the same time as the victor of Waterloo, could possibly understand the extraordinary place and prestige

he had in the country. He was an all-round strong figure and sagacious according to his faiths, and even reformers, wondering how obstinate the House of Lords might be, said, "He will keep it in order as long as he is alive." There was, of course, a peer, Lord Winchilsea, with whom the Duke had a challenge, and some people thought it shocking and others thought he deserved something worse.

What a pity Charles Pelham Villiers did not write his ordered reminiscences, for he saw an old, old world go and a new world come. They would have included a full portrait of Canning instead of the scraps, "a wonderful orator," "a man of singular natural charm," or "there was a good deal of mystery about him." Brougham? "An extraordinarily clever fellow, but nobody quite relied on him."

Peel? "Careful and cautious. Somebody said that if there was a public meeting of the whole country he would be the man to put in the chair, the ideal Mr. Chairman. The very quality there implied meant he was cool, even, perhaps, cold, and also that he had not many intimate or sincere friends to bother his judgment."

Palmerston? "A man of the world, with an instinctive knowledge of men and affairs and courage, even daring." Melbourne? "Somehow

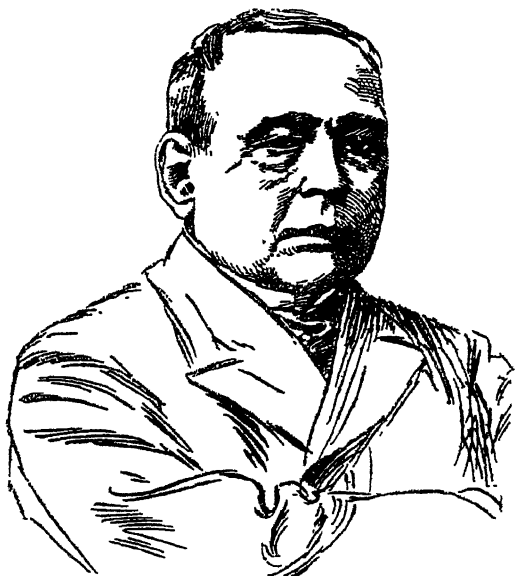
many people rather mistrusted him, but he got amazing credit for his guardianship of young Queen Victoria.” Daniel O’Connell ? “ Never out of bed at ten and up at four, studying his briefs ; a captivating orator with a natural sway over minds and emotions. He said he would repeal the Corn Laws almost as much as he would repeal the union between Ireland and England.”

Of those men only Benjamin Disraeli came into the testament of my next—and the next—“ Father ” of the House of Commons, Sir John Mowbray. He was a fine type of the county gentlemen who ruled England so long and one of the last of them in the full sense. They had, perhaps, governed by character more than by intellect, and along with a quiet, clear brain, and a sound, gracious heart, he had a sturdy character. Here was just the Englishman to whom “ Dizzy ” would have taken as a friend, without, perhaps, asking him to be a counsellor.

“ A wholly marvellous man,” was Sir John’s estimate of him, and it was based on personal intercourse. “ I have never met anybody who was so far-sighted, who had so true a political vision.” He cited the affair of the Suez Canal shares as one instance of this and the American Civil War as another.

“ DIZZY AND AMERICA ”

“ No doubt the Conservatives were for the South, almost to a man, but Disraeli held us back.



*Sir John Mowbray, a “ Father ” of the House of Commons, and a man finely distinctive of the County Gentlemen of England, who once had the “ guidin’ o’t ” in Parliament.*

Lord John Russell had said the Southern States were fighting the battle of independence and empire, and Gladstone that Jefferson Davis had created an army, a navy and a nation. Disraeli used always to say, “ ‘ America is a great nation, and it is not going to break up.’ ”

Next, from Sir John Mowbray, came a particular story of “ Dizzy,” with whom, shortly after the battle of Bull Run, he was a fellow-guest at an English country house. “ Well, what about this victory of the Confederates ? ” asked their hostess, commandingly, as a grand lady of mid-Victorian society would ask. Disraeli looked up at her and slowly replied, “ My dear lady, in words somebody has said before me, I cannot see farther than my nose, and that is a small one.” As a matter of fact it was not small, but pronounced and particular, only that did not affect the evasion in “ Dizzy’s ” remark.

Of his charm of manner, Sir John had enthusiastic memories—“ the easiest man to talk to I ever knew.” Also he paid an earnest tribute to Lady Beaconsfield, saying she was a wife among wives !

It was a common tale that she had her finger jammed in the carriage-door one afternoon when setting out to drive her husband to Westminster. Notwithstanding the pain, she did not then tell him of the accident, lest it should upset an important speech he was about to make. Sir John certified to the incident, saying it was in accord with her frequent merry words to her friends :

“ I try to save him from every worry I can. When he comes home late, I tell him the events of

my day and he tells me of his doings in the House of Commons, and I cheer them all over again.”

This brought up a classic story of the late-married but well-assorted pair, because Sir John Mowbray was act and part in it. He had, as he sometimes did, walked with “ Dizzy ” from the House of Commons to their Park Lane home at Stanhope Gate. The house was lighted up inside when they entered, and there was Lady “ Dizzy ” on the staircase, in evening dress, to receive her lord. It was her way to keep the place and herself lightsome and brightsome like this for him, and he, with his Oriental touch, liked it. He turned to Sir John and pointing to the attending flunkeys, to the glowing lights, and to the staircase, with her smiling, colourful ladyship coming down it, he said, “ She might be not only my wife ; she might be my mistress.”

As a leader, pure and simple, of the House of Commons, Disraeli, in the opinion of his old friend, was almost unmatched. He fancied that his secret, or part of it, lay in the splendid humour with which he managed the assembly. The House thought it was pleasing itself, even taking hold of the bit and riding independence, always dear to M.P.'s, when it was merely following his adroit lead. He rarely dined away from it, or, if he did, he would take some troublesome member of the party home with



him, in order to smooth him out. Thus he was ever ready to lull any storm before it had actually broken, or to solve any tangle that might arise. He was like an instinctively clever jockey who knows how to humour a horse and, by that management, get the best out of it.

Another Disraelian characteristic that has been carried down to us, also crept into my conversation with Sir John Mowbray. It was that he was hardly ever noticed to smile while in the House of Commons. Instances have been mentioned by Disraeli's close contemporaries because they were regarded as rarities. “ Yes,” said Sir John, “ it is true he had this peculiarity ; his invariable attitude, even when he was making fun of somebody in a speech, was that of gravity.”

Disraeli was not an orator, like John Bright, or Gladstone, but he was a consummate Parliamentary debater. He often repeated himself, and he did so on the principle that it was necessary to hammer things, in order to get them into people's heads. That plan involved the risk of becoming tedious, and occasionally Disraeli, with all his wit and brilliance, could be tedious.

This led our talk, by way of contrast, to eloquence in Parliament, and, in Sir John's memory, Gladstone's speech on the Reform Bill of 1866 was the greatest

speech he ever delivered. The peroration, with its "Time is against you," was no less than beautiful, grand, sublime all in one. Then John Bright's finest effort was his deliverance upon the subject of the Crimean War, with its lofty citation of the Angel of Death. "And," said Sir John Mowbray, "the beating of his wings could, indeed, almost be heard in the awesome silence which fell on the House of Commons."

The most dramatic scene Sir John had witnessed there was, he thought, when the first Irish Home Rule Bill was rejected, as a result of the split in the Liberal Party. "The excitement was immense," he recalled, "and for myself I was not sure whether we should be able, with the Liberal Unionists, as they became known, to throw out the measure. I believed that we would be very near it, but I was not quite confident, and this uncertainty on the part of everybody gave the division a tense feeling of drama."

The Commons of Sir John Mowbray would scarcely know the Commons of to-day, but he thought the House always kept its Parliamentary spirit, whatever the outer changes might be. It had its breezes, rising in one quarter, or another, as the case might be, but it had an unfailing appreciation of what was decorous, dignified and of good report.

No doubt he would, if he were in Parliament to-day, still pay that tribute to its sense of things.

“ I fancy,” he observed with a laugh, “ there was more Parliamentary cock-crowing, more trouble generally, from 1835 to 1839, when Abercromby was Speaker, than there has ever been since, or is ever likely to be.” Saying this, Sir John quoted a remark by a great Speaker, a friend of his, Shaw Lefevre :

“ I found that until I was sixty I could rule the House. When I passed that age I began to discover that the House had a tendency to rule me.”

Possibly the qualities which win success in it continue, in essence, what they were, like its mental spirit and its personal atmosphere. “ There must,” prescribed Sir John Mowbray, “ be some natural capacity for political work in a member who hopes to achieve anything. He must work hard : Disraeli was an ardent worker ; Gladstone a marvel of industry as well as of character. Also a man must have strong convictions ; he must be sincere or the House will discount him. He needs courage and readiness in debate, and humour has its uses in Parliament, as in all life.” Sir John completed this prescription for a successful M.P. by adding, “ Besides those qualities, let him have as much as possible of every element that is good.”

Another, not unlike, estimate of the qualities for

the perfect M.P. was given me by a "Father of the House," who did not, I fancy, actually become "Father," notwithstanding his long service. This was Sir George Osborne Morgan, the "Old Parliamentary Hand" of the Welsh Party when Mr. Lloyd George was still hardly more than its David. Sir George entered the House of Commons for Denbighshire in 1868, or soon after the Reform Bill which changed it so radically. He remained in it down to nearly its still greater modern changes in membership, and he was a student of its moods and ways.

What would he say to anybody who, on becoming an M.P., asked his guiding advice? "First," he answered, "be honest. When a man woos a constituency he has ever so many second-hand crotchets put before him. It is so much easier to say 'Yes,' than to say 'No,' and thus he comes to the House with a millstone about his neck. Second, he should never talk about what he does not understand. The House of Commons is at once the most indulgent and the most critical audience in the world. It will stand anything from a man who knows what he is speaking about, but woe to the man who speaks for the sake of speaking." Silence, when it should be silence, was twice golden at St. Stephen's, and Sir George waved his hand, as if in appeal to that sentinel of Parliament, Big Ben.

“ Whoever,” he summed up, “ observes the things I have suggested, has a right facility of speech, a good temper, a good digestion, endurance of physique, and that sense of humour which keeps him from making a fool of himself ; such a man is pretty sure of a fair Parliamentary success, even if he does not stamp his name upon the ages, a dream far more often than an achievement.”

Parnell, Sir George Osborne Morgan named as a born Parliamentarian and a natural king and ruler of men. He was a high example of what a strong personality could accomplish in the House of Commons. When he got up to speak one could literally hear a pin drop, so earnest was the attention. Also Randolph Churchill was a natural and great Parliamentarian, a man with undoubted political genius. While he hit hard, and may sometimes have left a sting, Sir George did not think that was a true part of “ Randy’s ” character.

“ One night he criticised something I said and, as it happened, misquoted me. I pointed this out, and he came to me, said he was sorry, and that it was his deafness which prevented him from hearing me clearly.” This was one of the last occasions on which they had a friendly talk, for Lord Randolph’s health was already beginning to fail.

Decorousness generally Sir George associated

with "The House" in the Eighteen-Nineties, an ever-growing decorousness ; also youthfulness of membership, as compared with earlier times. Didn't Professor Fawcett, the blind Postmaster-General, say to him : " At Cambridge I am a dried-up don, but here I am a rising politician." That memory sent Sir George on an anecdotal trail and to a story with which he had once amused John Bright about Pitt and the traditional hard-drinking nights in the House of Commons.

" It was related to myself," he said, " by a gentleman who, as a boy, had dined with Addington at Bellamy's when Pitt was of the party. Pitt had just finished his second bottle of port, as a message came that he was urgently wanted at the House. He was so overcome with wine that he had to grope his way to the door, but once in the House he got up and delivered, so my informant declared, his greatest speech."

On this John Bright made two remarks : that there were no reporters in those years to hear Pitt, and that everybody who did hear him had drunk, not two bottles of port only, as he had, but three ! Bright's commentary, Sir George remarked, was a sufficient contradiction of the notion, which somehow got about, that he had no sense of humour, whereas he had a very real sense of humour. Want, of

humour had also been charged against Peel, but there was a good story to contradict that, and Sir George produced it from the archives of his memory.

An almost forgotten character, Feargus O'Connor, had said, in a speech, that if he were Prime Minister, he would not care whether Victoria was Queen of England or the devil King. Peel was asked if he meant to prosecute O'Connor for this, and, said he, "Seeing the quarter it comes from, the less notice taken of it the better. But," he added, "if the aspirations of the Honourable Member were realised and Beelzebub were seated on the throne of these islands, I feel sure the Prime Minister would never be able to complain that he had not got the confidence of the Crown."

Heavy humour perhaps, old-fashioned humour may be, but expressed in a Parliamentary form which would have appealed to the Commons. Equally, said Sir George Osborne Morgan, they would appreciate the neat, light retort, in another incident which he quoted from his remembrances at Westminster. It involved Sir John Holker, as Solicitor-General, Sir Wilfrid Lawson, as temperance champion, and a licensing bill which was being discussed.

The phrase "populous places" occurred in it, and Holker declared that, at least the lobby into which Lawson would lead his supporters would not be a

populous place. "I think," was the instant retort, "Sir George Holker does not put his case high enough, because in deciding what is a populous place, you are bound to take into account the *density* of the population."

Outsiders always wonder, being human as well as long-suffering, whether the multitude of speeches delivered in the House of Commons really influences divisions. Sir George Osborne Morgan, who had the Victorian regard for a great writer, quoted Macaulay's historic speech about the Mastership of the Rolls.

"The only instance," he went on, "coming within my own experience, was John Bright's address on the second reading of the Burials Amendment Bill in 1875. It was the greatest oration I ever heard in the House, and its description of the Quaker funeral is, to my mind, one of the finest things in the English language. Its effect was so remarkable that, though, as the mover of the second reading of the Bill, I was entitled to reply on the debate, I went to a division the moment Bright sat down."

Compare Bright and Gladstone as speakers? Impossible! It would be like comparing Milton and Shakespeare, they were so different. And perhaps Disraeli would mean still more contrast?



Surely. “ My most vivid memory of him,” said Sir George Osborne Morgan, “ is the wonderful way in which he used, by an adroit answer, to parry an attack ” ; and that also meant a story.

An “ honourable gentleman ” of the House of Commons had called the Irish Party a “ disreputable crew.” “ What,” demanded one of them, Alexander Sullivan, “ would the Prime Minister say if I were to call him and his Cabinet a disreputable crew ? ” Disraeli gravely rose and gravely replied, “ Sir, I should take no notice of it whatever.”

It was, thought Sir George Osborne Morgan, a better reply than Palmerston made to the Parliamentary reporters when they asked him for more accommodation in which to do their work. His reply was “ No,” that it was not possible, and theirs, “ Then, sir, we shall have to report your speeches as you speak them ” ; which brings us back—always back—to Fleet Street.

### XIII. SOME MEN OF LETTERS

*Oliver Wendell Holmes "at home" with his "Autocrat"; William Morris, poet and Socialist, "at home" at his Kelmscott Press; and Charles Dickens, novelist and man, "at home" in the memory of his publisher.*

ONE who walks long and intimately in the London literary world necessarily comes into contact with most of its celebrities. There were the late Victorians, there were the Edwardians and there have been the very modern Georgians, a three-volume pageant, you see. It is enough here to turn a few of its pages for portraits suggested by particular memories of agreeable experiences.

The bustle and tiredness of an early visit to America included a call on Oliver Wendell Holmes at his summer home, Beverley Farms, a score of miles along the New England coast from Boston. Who would not like to have met the "Autocrat at the Breakfast Table"? He was then a very old man, but as youthful in spirit and as keen in con-

versation as he was gracious in his welcome to a stranger from England.

Outside his house without a name, for it needed none, the air carried the scent of flowers and the hum of bees. Just inside was his library, with a tidy desk in the window and a working range of books beside it. On the desk lay an unfinished sheet of manuscript, and, said he :

“ No man, you know, is ever too old to do anything in the nature of what has been his custom. It is when a man come over to years, tackles anything entirely new that he feels it, and not until then. Ah,” he added with a laugh, quizzical but golden, like a heart ever rejoicing, “ you are, perhaps, curious as to my habits of eating, sleeping and so on, especially as I am a doctor. Simple enough ; just the same as anybody else’s,” and he gravely described them.

“ I’m called in the morning a quarter after seven o’clock, and I have breakfast, of coffee, bread-and-butter and fish or an egg, at half past eight. During the forenoon I walk a short while or a longer while, and in the afternoon I drive in my phaeton for a couple of hours and receive visitors. I’m never to bed until after eleven, and as to literary work, there’s always something doing, only I suffer from weak eyes.”



*Dr. Oliver Wendell Holmes at Boston*



Perhaps, he went on, with a laugh in his voice, that was what kept him from reading all the manuscripts younger writers sent him for his kind opinion, and all the new books which came to him for a word. He wondered if the fate of those greetings was what it would be with other honoured veterans of the pen. A newcomer got on to his breakfast-table, then to a shelf in the library, afterwards to higher and higher shelves, and finally in many cases, he was afraid, to the book hospital at the top of the house. What might happen some day to the contents of this hospital he hardly dared say ; and now, Oliver Wendell Holmes being long gone, there is, perhaps, nobody left to tell, though it does not matter.

“ Did you ever,” I asked, “ discover a genius among the young men who send you their manuscripts and new books ? ” “ Bret Harte,” he said, “ has told me that in his early days I wrote him a letter of encouragement. Until he mentioned the thing, I had forgotten all about it. Talent I have several times discovered, because it is less rare than genius, though,” he added, “ sometimes near it in quality.”

We went out into the verandah and its flowers, and, waving his small, delicate hand at them, he said, “ I like flowers, all kinds of them ; perhaps

roses the most. On birthdays, and I've had a good lot, I get so many flowers that they hardly leave room in the house for ourselves." He was thinking of his wife, a dear, winsome old lady, whose unobtrusive attentions to him let me see how perfect in companionship they were, wandering down the hill of a happy life, hand in hand.

"Oh yes," he resumed, "people are kind, for this golden spoon in my coffee-cup was sent to me from Rome by a lady, and, notice, it has a goose on the top of it. Not complimentary, is it, to give any one a spoon with a goose, but then mine is the goose which saved Rome, and that makes all the difference."

A charming, ancient family doctor, become a famous man of letters ! So light with his knowledge, so free of it in his talk, so elegant in body and mind, at more than the Scriptural three-score years and ten. He had written with a sensitive, delicate mind, and his message had come through a great, understanding heart, the necessary way with good tidings for mankind.

By and by it was his hour for the afternoon drive, and the old-fashioned phaeton, with an old-fashioned coachman and an old-fashioned horse awaited him ; a cosy "one-hoss shay." "Come with me," he invited, "and I'll drive you to the station, and with

that he slipped on a summer overcoat and found his silk hat—more stately old fashion.

“But the sun’s too strong,” called his wife. “Wait and I’ll get you my parasol,” and she did, a pretty thing of black silk and black lace, and with it held jauntily above his head we drove to my train. His gesture of good-bye, so gracious and sincere, without decoration or emphasis, was as a fragrance of days which are no more.

On some morning in the Eighteen-Nineties this announcement appeared in a London morning paper :

“We understand that Mr. William Morris has been offered the Poet Laureateship and has declined it. The invitation came through Mr. Bryce, Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, though, of course, Mr. Gladstone is primarily responsible. The offer and the refusal do Premier and poet equal credit.”

Two days later the same paper printed this other letter :

“Will you kindly contradict the report that I have been offered the Laureateship, as it is not true ; yours obediently, William Morris.”

What was the truth ? No doubt that Morris had been “sounded” by Bryce, afterwards James Viscount Bryce, with the knowledge, more or less,



of Gladstone, and that the matter ended there. The incident is interesting in itself, but still more so as a lesson of contrast on the 'Nineties and to-day.

A Socialist Poet Laureate ? What would Queen Victoria have said to that, and what would Society, which still boasted a capital "S" and rode in Rotten Row, have said ? In our year of greater grace we have a Poet Laureate who is as good a democrat as William Morris was, and his appointment, by a Labour Prime Minister, had a nation's welcome.

If Morris had succeeded Tennyson, it would have fixed his name in the Laureate line, but his poetry never needed any bush, and besides, wasn't he a master printer ? It was as the reformer of English printed books that I had an afternoon with him at his Kelmscott Press on The Mall, Hammersmith. "Well, here we are," he exclaimed merrily, as he entered his work-room, where I had awaited him, watching the Thames glide silently past. He bent down to the fire to light his pipe, a plain, practical article which quickly yielded a good stream of smoke, and then he was ready.

What sort of fellow was William Morris ? Short, at least rather short, like John Burns, but also, like him, of the bull-dog breed : solidly built, sinewy, strong, with a beard-clad, arresting face and a striking head, wreathed by tangled grey hair.

He wore a navy blue suit, the jacket double-breasted, of course, again like his friend, John Burns. The Morris shirt was of a brighter blue than the Morris suit, but he had no red tie that day, though he sometimes sported one.

What was his idea in starting the Kelmscott Press? "I wanted to make some nice books, likewise to amuse myself, and I think I may say I have done both. Of course, the nice books were the serious thing," and he blew into the mouth of his pipe to liven up the lazy tobacco. "Thought I to myself, any effort which can help us to the very best printing can only do good, and as a writer and as editor of 'Commonweal,' I had come to know something about type. The name Kelmscott? I took it from a jolly old house I go to in the summer, on the borders of Oxfordshire and Gloucestershire."

If you are lucky enough to have the "Kelmscott Chaucer," or some other work then printed by William Morris, you have only to open its pages to see what he was at. His prime idea was to go back to the age when type was admittedly best and also simplest. For instance, to the Venetian printers of 1470, who, with their Roman types, reached almost perfection in the mixture of beauty and simplicity.

Not unnaturally he wanted to see his own poetry in the handsomest type, but, far more, his ambition was to give English classics a setting which should honour them. The "Golden Legend" had been last printed in 1527, and surely it was time that somebody should create a new dress for it. A sixteenth-century copy, if it could be found at all, would perhaps cost two hundred pounds, while he offered the Kelmscott one for ten guineas.

Morris would be amazed to know what copies of his "Golden Legend" now fetch, but he had no complaints. He could not have foreseen that a single one would gather value enough to buy a motor-car having the same name as himself ; and he would not have minded. It would have interested him more to think of the later progress, in another field, under the banner, "William Morris."

"I did not expect," he said, "that I should be able to carry on the Kelmscott Press without loss, but thanks be, we have made both ends meet." He might have claimed that it stood for a revival in English printing and bookmaking, but he was only conscious of that in so far as he desired this and was working for it. He was satisfied there were a fair number of people in England who liked beautiful books, and, moreover, liked them for themselves, and that rejoiced him.

There was just, I suggested, the danger that the English poet, piping onward as well as piping melody, might be lost in the English master printer. "But," he protested, "if a man writes poetry, it is a great advantage that he should do other work. His poetry will be better, and he is not tied to making money out of it. I don't believe in a man making money out of poetry; no, and I don't believe in it for the sake of the poetry either"; and then he told an appropriate little story.

It was about a person who asked another person, probably Morris himself, what sort of a branch literature was, especially verse. "Oh," was the reply, "a very good branch to hang yourself on."

"If," added William Morris, taking his pipe from his mouth with one hand and softly beating the air with the other, "I want to write poetry, I simply do it, and everything else can go to the devil. But it would be a jolly hard fate if one were condemned to do nothing except write poetry." A dictum calling for thought, and for memory of its deliverance, because it was rolled forth in a voice rich of the sounds which are England.

There can hardly be anybody who would not have liked to meet, still better to know, Charles Dickens, great humanist and great story-teller.

The next best thing is to hear of him, as he was in the flesh and the spirit, through somebody who knew him well. Percy Fitzgerald, whose vast Victorian industry you may consult in books of literary history, was a relic of the active Dickensian day. He served with the novelist on "Household Words," and thus saw much of him at close quarters.

It was good to chat with this other "Old Fitz" about all that in the house, between Pimlico and Belgravia, where he spent his later years. You had the feeling, when you entered it, that he must have been there all his life, for it might have been a museum, and he a "museum specimen." He was tall and gaunt and spoke hoarsely, and his rooms echoed as if ghosts were falling over the undusted chairs on to the undusted carpets.

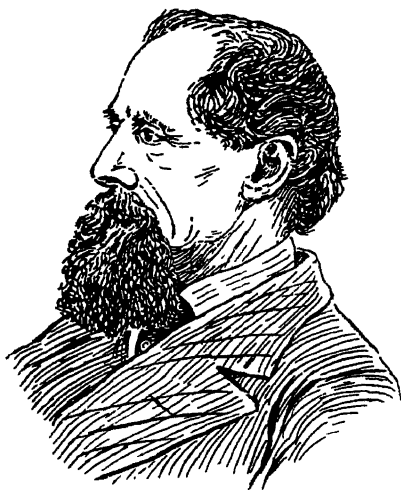
Human nature being what it is, my picture of Percy Fitzgerald himself is a clearer thing than whatever picture he gave me of Charles Dickens. It held every pleasantness, but was wooden in the drawing, like Percy's writings; and impressions so conveyed fade quickly. It was different, however, with another man who knew Dickens still better and with simple statements could recreate him; and that was Frederic Chapman of a surname which sends us humming the ditty:

“ *Chapman and Hall*  
*Swear not at all ;*  
*Mr. Chapman's ‘ Aye ’ is ‘ Aye ’*  
*And Mr. Hall's ‘ Nay ’ is ‘ Nay.’ ”*

Dickens's publishers, of course, so Frederic Chapman, cousin to one of the founders, and afterwards himself the head, had him through hand, as the saying is. “ It was in 1845,” he told me, “ that I first met the novelist, and from then onward until his death, I constantly saw him. When he went to stay at Gad's Hill I used to go down there and visit him, and so we were really personal friends, not merely publisher and author.” A Dickensian platform of this quality was bound to yield the genuine, human stuff, so let us meet Mr. Frederic Chapman in his Henrietta Street room, with the smell of vegetables and the scent of flowers blowing over from Covent Garden Market.

Dickens, he began, had charm, always an indefinable quality, always a gift from the gods of good-fortune or the gods of chance. Where did his charm lie ? In his conversation, or in his disposition, or was it an all-round, all-over charm ? It was difficult to say what was the most pleasing thing about him, but behind everything was the magic of personality. For a time after he sprang

into fame, he went a good deal into society, whereas in his later years it saw little of him. He hardly, perhaps, at any period, cared to be "lionised," for, by nature, he was essentially simple.



*A drawing of Charles Dickens, from a photograph of him taken in 1868 and engraved in 1870, the years, or thereabout, to which there apply the personal memories of him communicated to us by his friend and publisher, Frederic Chapman.*

At Gad's Hill, his Kent home, he lived in good style, and he had many notable people visiting him, yet his tastes remained simple. His talk, which ran naturally, easily, was fascinating and full of anecdotes and incidents about folk he had met and

places he had seen. And, please, at Gad's Hill there was no sitting by the men at the dinner-table after the ladies had left. Within a few minutes Dickens would be on his feet, leading the way to the drawing-room. He was chivalrous and kind-hearted, and therefore thoughtful of his guests, whoever they might be.

"When," I asked his publisher and friend, "did he write? Morning, forenoon, afternoon or evening, because writing habits, like bad habits, become fixed, and they tell us about the writer?"

"Mostly," was the reply, "between breakfast and lunch, when he would disappear to his study, afterwards made so familiar by the picture of the empty chair at Gad's Hill. In the afternoon he would arrange a walk or a drive for us, though he did not strike me as especially fond of driving. But he had a real love of walking and would think nothing of starting an eight-mile tramp a couple of hours before dinner. Once, I remember, after dining with Mark Lemon and other friends in London, he walked all the way home to Gad's Hill, I suppose thirty miles or so. I'm not sure whether it was not on this occasion that a curious experience befell him"; and the recollection meant a new Dickens story.

He saw a man taking down the shutters of a milk-



shop, and he went in and asked for a glass of milk and, for payment, proffered a shilling. "What do you mean?" quoth the milk-man sharply; "it's a bad shilling." Dickens looked at it, and unquestionably the coin was discoloured, and for that reason suspicious.

He took out the rest of his money and, lo and behold, it was all similarly discoloured. The milk-man, thinking the worst of his caller, would have nothing to do with it and glowered at him. Dickens tackled the position by explaining that he was Charles Dickens, the novelist, and on his road to Gad's Hill. "Charles Dickens," snapped the milk-man, "that tale won't wash, and you've had my milk." Finally, however, he was convinced that his customer was indeed the famous author, and they parted with mutual excuses and compliments.

"Since," I remarked, "Dickens was so keen a walker, he, no doubt, had energetic and steady health?" "Pretty good health," said Frederic Chapman, "except that one of his feet troubled him now and then, why, exactly, I don't recall. But nothing ever interfered with his devotion to his work, and when he had finished a manuscript he warmly interested himself in its publication. He was exacting with himself in his MSS., changing

this part and interleaving that part, so that often it was almost indecipherable. Also he made extensive alterations to his proofs up to the moment that, as a book, they went out into the world."

"Do you happen," I said, "to know on what system he wrote his novels, his method of construction and working out?" "He once told me," answered his publisher, and who could have been more interested to know? "After getting hold of a central idea he revolved it in his mind until he had fully thought it out. Then he made what I may call a programme of the story and its characters, drawing up each chapter in skeleton form. Upon this skeleton he set to work and gave it the literary blood, sinew and vitality of a 'David Copperfield' or an 'Oliver Twist.'"

This was as near, perhaps, as one could get to Charles Dickens, the writer and the man, after so many years. All direct echoes of him tell that he was friendly and kindly, even with strangers, though he had no special gift for suffering fools gladly. It was, may be, an evidence of his genial human nature that he was rather inclined to noticeable clothes and jewellery.

"You could always," said somebody to me, "pick out Dickens, in the Strand, by his red waistcoat, with a heavy watch-chain across it." Old

photographs of him bear out his style in clothes, and there is one showing him in evening dress, the trousers of which have two broad rows of braid. His sense of the picturesque might have suggested two rows instead of one, or none, or it may just have been his version of the fashion of the day. Anyhow, his philosophy and his humour were ever his saviour, and here is an anecdote which illustrates that.

A friend of his was giving a concert at the Old Lyceum Theatre, and went there beforehand, to see that everything was all right. Dickens walked in and found him pacing up and down in no very good humour. "What's the matter?" he asked. "Oh," was the answer, "there's a man Smith who has been singing my songs, and I've written to him saying if the songs are worthy of that, they are worthy of acknowledgment." "Look here," said Dickens, "there isn't a man living who hasn't a Smith on his back."

Probably he himself even found that when he was in Fleet Street, for, of course, he had his great venture and adventure there as editor of the "Daily News."

#### XIV. MY QUEEN VICTORIA

*The Lady of Balmoral where she "noddit to me," and was just womanly ; and the Royal Sovereign who stood for the rise of the British Empire and stamped her name upon an age of the world's history.*

QUEEN VICTORIA was a little woman to the eye, and perhaps she was not intellectual, but she had both mental and bodily character. This character, shaped by early responsibilities and cultivated by constant traffic with the "wise and the bold," was the bedrock of her personality. Her reign of sixty years sanctified her as queen and lady, and for these reasons she is embedded like granite in English history.

And yet it was a most homely figure that I often saw on Deeside, when she visited it every year, about June, and again in August or September. Early in summer Royal Balmoral and its homeland, the Valley of the Dee, are glorious in quivering greens, and in the autumn they are as glorious in golden browns. Queen Victoria loved the two pictures, and they became part of her life as we

“residents ” knew it, an experience to be completed later, by many a glimpse of her as the Sovereign, from Fleet Street.

She once nearly ran me down in Ludgate Circus, or rather her two outriders did, and only a nimble jump on to a “rest ” saved me. She was in a large landau, drawn by four bays, with postilions, a familiar turn-out with her, and in the rumble behind sat an Indian orderly, accompanied by a flunkey to do his bidding, which was John Brown’s way. With the Queen was her youngest daughter, Princess Beatrice, her invariable companion in her later years, and there was also a lady-in-waiting in the carriage.

It had come from Buckingham Palace by the Thames Embankment, so taking in Ludgate Circus, and going on at a good pace, though where one does not remember. That passing show is merely recalled as typical of the Queen ; her stout, broad-based figure, crowned by a black bonnet which never seemed to vary in shape, and only in colour by a touch of white trimming ; her rather reddish, roundish face, wrinkled by the years and many lines of decision ; her drooping and firm mouth, often set in gravity, but now and then lit with a slow smile ; and her sunk eyes, which remained clear and seeing, whether bespectacled or not, as the event, near, or far, might demand.

A simple, plain, squarely set little "body"—and that word is used in the kindly Scottish sense—Kipling's "Widow of Windsor" in appearance and motherliness, but Queen every five feet of her, and let nobody think otherwise. Personality in her case included very definitely the gift which we call command, without the need for asserting it. This meant individual sovereignty, and she had only to reign through the ages, as she did, to get the halo of sovereignty in a more picturesque sense, from the far-flung British Commonwealth. She would, most likely, have drawn her strong, spear-like pen through that now accepted term and written "Empire," for she was old-fashioned, thinking the throne the golden link of union, and she its occupant. She was no democrat, and could be domineering and prejudiced, though also, in another mood, understanding, sympathetic and tactful.

She would, probably, have made an even better Elizabeth than Queen Elizabeth if she had lived in the Elizabethan time, having, besides the nameless quality of command, the womanly quality of intuition. She could win her way as well as take it, for her heart never let her forget she was a woman, a wife, a mother, a widow, any more than she forgot the crown which she wore and which she made secure, on a slowly remade basis, for those who

have followed her. Only now, looking backward, do we see how that evolution was a continuous thread of her reign, though she kept the reins tight.

Never, perhaps, did she say out that she reigned by divine right, and she had the vicissitudes of her father and mother, the Duke and Duchess of Kent, to remind her otherwise. But she must, now and then, as amid the sincere yet heady acclamations of her two jubilees, have almost felt it. Moreover, her early portraits, with bared shoulders, showing how comely they were, and nimble, silk-slipped feet peeping forth, tell well enough that she cared to be admired in youth, as well as revered in later years.

That Walter Raleigh of the Victorian age, Sir George Grey, spoke to me of Victoria as a girl, when he saw her in 1837, the year she ascended the throne, and the year he landed to explore the almost unknown wilds of Western Australia. He said that in her youth she gave a winsome impression of comeliness in person, vivacity in temperament, promise in mental things, and taste and care in dress. "Who," he also said, "could have imagined the glorious reign hers was to be? It was to surpass in beauty of achievement all foretelling." It is, however, the human question involved in the girl and the woman that interests us now.

Might she not have remained more volatile in personality, while as able a queen, if she had married a husband less weighty in mind and serious in character than Prince Albert of Saxe-Coburg-Gotha? He, we know, vitally influenced her development as woman and sovereign, and the cloud of motherhood in which she dwelt meant heavy domesticity. There was no time for Victoria to be gay in the beautiful sense we associate with young womanhood, or to become, by virtue of her position, a leader of English society and fashion. But one likes to think she might, under other circumstances, have been a full-blown daughter of Merrie England, all to her good and that of her people, who, having won their place in the sun, are entitled to its warmth.

Early memories of her at Balmoral recall the widow resigned, thanks to the healing goodness of time, if still actively sorrowing. Driving or walking, she bore the imprint of grey and sober years, and did she not once say, "The great trouble, as we grow older, is that our intimate friends die out, and we make no others to take their places"? It would be a definition of this to say that an old, intimate friend never needs explanation, but knows, while one made later, cannot be in that relationship.

No more explanation is needed for the high



office of trust and confidence which russet-coated John Brown came to hold in Queen Victoria's household. You had only to see him attending her to understand the relationship of habit and service between the royal mistress and the royal gillie, and how stupid it was for anybody to whisper nothings. John, as a young man of a Crathie family living simply, God-fearingly, and by hard toil, was chosen by the Prince Consort himself as personal attendant for his wife.

If she could not walk, for the exercise she liked in the bracing Highland air, and rode instead, John led the pony, and if she drove, he sat in the rumble of the carriage, guard over her safety and comfort. He was thus always with her, he became indispensable to her, and being a man of natural good sense, proven loyalty and enough education to polish both, she talked with him and to him, for who that is human can be always aloofly silent?

Gradually he became a privileged servant, around whom there grew a certain atmosphere of power, and probably he exercised it not only in the servants' hall but in higher places. There is a Deeside story of the Queen going down to the rail-head at Ballater to meet her daughter, then the Crown Princess of Prussia, later the tragic Empress Frederick. On the way back to Balmoral a shower



*Queen Victoria at Balmoral, in mid-life and mid-reign, with John Brown, her trusted personal servant, who attended her everywhere. She wrote of him, when he died, that "He has all the independence and elevated feelings peculiar to the Highland race and is singularly kindhearted."*

struck the valley, as often, in those high latitudes, it does, while the sun is shining. John Brown promptly closed the hood of the carriage, although the Crown Princess said, "Is it necessary? The air is so fresh and beautiful?" "It is necessary, yer Majesty," answered John, "because my Majesty has rheumatics and mauna' get wet."

John could be outspoken even when Queen Victoria herself was the target of admonition. Possibly she had learned that Scotsmen, high and low, when they are paying service, devotion or affection, are apt to be awkwardly self-conscious, if not oddly bashful; and so express themselves. It is really a characteristic of sincerity, because it bubbles from the deeps, bare nature not waiting to be clothed in the softness and grace of artificial silk.

John Brown was fond of fishing, as anyone brought up on the banks of the Aberdeenshire Dee should be, and he could fish the Balmoral water when and where he liked. He was having an hour at the salmon, the Queen wanted to see him for some purpose, and a messenger came pelting along with this news. You can fancy that messenger's homely but deferential, "Oh, Mr. Brown, Her Majesty's askin' for ye."

John was fast in a salmon and indifferent to every-

thing else, so he just said, "Tell her Majesty that I'm landin' a fish, and when I'm done I'll come and take her commands." We don't know what the Queen thought, if she got John's message in that form, but anyhow, he never lost her confidence. His friends would add that he never abused it, because having a kindly care for his own relatives is not less a virtue in a plain man than in another man.

When he died and was buried in Crathie Churchyard, Queen Victoria erected her "cairn of remembrance" to him, a handsome granite monument. On it she put an inscription saying what a loyal servant he had been to her, and signifying her queenly regard for him. King Edward, as the story later went about Balmoral, took exception to the memorial and corresponding action, and surely that was unkingly and almost unkindly. But he made various changes, which could not all be popular, when he became the laird of a property that belongs privately to the Royal Family, not to the State, like Buckingham Palace or Windsor Castle.

During the Eighteen-Nineties the Tsar Nicholas of Russia and his Tsaritsa, a favourite granddaughter of Queen Victoria, visited her at Balmoral. They and their first-born were escorted from Ballater by a clanking troop of the Scots Greys, and a group of us were there to record this and other

happenings. While we waited for the cavalcade, a voice with a lingering Aberdeenshire accent said to me, "Hullo, you here." It was an old family friend of those parts, then occupying an important office with the Queen, and when he explained, "I'm just making an official round—come along," I answered "Surely," and presently we were within the grounds of Balmoral.

It was a fine, blue-skied, mellow-mooned autumn night, and remarked he, "The Queen and Princess Beatrice are sitting at an open window waiting for the Tsar and Tsaritsa." His ultimate point of duty was outside that window, and I stood with him in the shadow of the light, while the Queen and her daughter talked within. What they said was sacred to the confidence reposed in me, so I only had ears for the beauty of the Queen's voice.

It was an old voice in that it was sometimes low and sometimes hesitant, but there was youthfulness in its resonance and music in its timbre. Up and down it flowed, and one could have listened long enough for sheer pleasure in sound and cadence, apart from the unique experience of being in near contact, under unusual conditions, with a personality majestic in life and now majestic in history.

Some legacy of the Queen's voice may, perhaps, be detected in that of King George V, which is

loud and full, and rich without harshness. His spoken word always strikes a listener as being stronger than his physique, and his purely English accent comes out beautifully. Queen Victoria's talk, notwithstanding her age, was admirably clear, as it flowed through that open Balmoral window looking forth on the long, sleeping hills.

Of news about that Highland visit by the Tsar and his wife, both cast for tragedy later, there was really none, as Fleet Street assesses news. Court Circulars are not inspiring, nor revealing, so it occurred to me, knowing the local people well, that I had better turn to them for likely dispatches. A friendly farmhouse, on a not too distant hill-side, supplied simple but sufficient quarters and the use of a dog-cart. The young men of the farm went beating every day with the Balmoral shooters, and naturally, over the high-tea, when they returned home, I heard all about things.

Had the Tsar, no great sportsman by taste or experience, gone out with the Prince of Wales, by and by King Edward, the Duke of York, now King George, and the other “guns” of the party? Or had he preferred to linger in Queen Victoria's rose-garden, making love to his charming consort and their first baby? That pretty picture of Nicholas and his family set itself often enough to show that

he had in him those domestic qualities which are reckoned the basis of a happy life. If, reluctantly, perhaps, he had gone shooting, was it true that he half-missed a stag when he shouldn't, and that it was getting away wounded—the unspeakable thing in a Scottish forest—as the Prince of Wales, with a rapid shot, bowled it over, mercifully dead.

Dear colleagues, down the valley in their hotel, began to have messages from their editors in London saying, “Why are you silent, with so much good ‘copy’ coming to one Fleet Street daily?” Court officials took to reading that Radical journal for its Balmoral news, and generally the situation became a little difficult. Happily, with delicate and discreet management, it held together until a terribly wet Saturday when the Tsar and the Tsaritsa went away, again escorted by the Scots Greys. A long Sunday news-telegram made a very good wind-up for my journal in the Highlands, because your knowing Fleet Street man bears in mind, in another sense, the motto of the old Irish jarvey, “Always keep a trot for the avenue.”

My first Queen Victoria, the Lady of Balmoral, was perfectly pictured, while we took off our bonnets to her, by a Scottish journalist, Dewar Willock, in a little, inspired poem, “She Noddit to Me.” It gave the Lady of Balmoral real pleasure,

for that she let be known, and it should be in any memory of her as woman and queen ; so here it is, though many people may already be acquainted with its sensitive, " native Doric " lines :

*" I'm but an auld body  
Living up on Deeside,  
In a twa-roomed bit hoosie  
Wi' a too-fa beside ;  
Wi' my coo an' my grumphy,  
I'm as happy's a bee,  
But I'm far prooder noo,  
Since she noddit to me.*

*" I'm nae sae far past wi't,  
I'm gie trig and hale,  
Can plant twa-three taties  
An' look after my kale ;  
And when oor Queen passes  
I rin oot to see  
Gin by luck she nicht notice  
An' nod oot to me.*

*" But I've aye been unlucky  
An' the blinds were aye doon,  
Till last week the time  
O' her veesit cam' round ;*



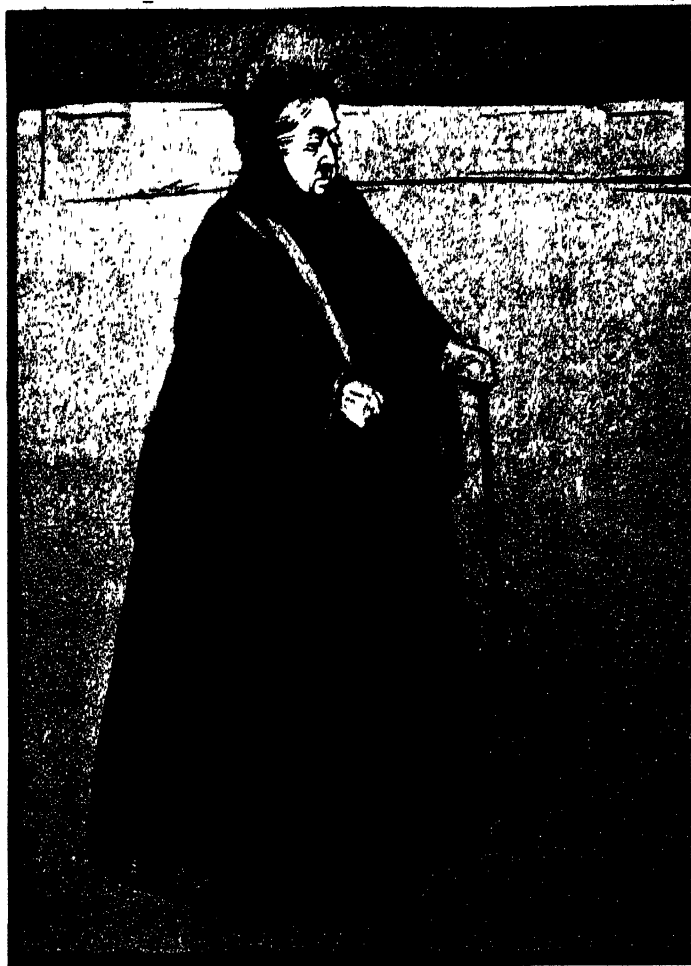
MY QUEEN VICTORIA

*I waves my bit apron  
As brisk's I could dee  
An' the Queen lauched fu' kindly  
An' noddit to me.*

*" My son sleeps in Egypt,  
It's nae eese to fret,  
An' yet, when I think o't  
I'm sair like to greet ;  
She may feel for my sorrow,  
She's a mither, ye see,  
An' may be she kent o't  
When she noddit to me."*

My second Queen Victoria, the Sovereign of the Realm, I saw for the last time on her eightieth birthday, which she celebrated at Windsor Castle. Surrounded by her family, all tenderness and care for her, she was serenaded with madrigals, as Queen Elizabeth was serenaded in her time, and indeed that was the idea. It was a spacious idea, suggestive of a historic figure and a historic age with which her own personality and her own reign might ultimately be compared, and no doubt she liked it, for otherwise would she have accepted it ?

Massed choirs stood and sang beneath the



W. Nicholson

By Courtesy of the

*Queen Victoria as an Old Lady*



windows of the homely Oak Room, while the Queen took her simple breakfast there, and from the quadrangle we could watch her, not as through a glass darkly, but quite clearly. On her head she had a white lace cap such as she always wore indoors, and round her neck, and falling down over her black dress, was a heavy Victorian gold chain. Her rheumatism, with her for long, had so increased that indoors, as out-of-doors, she made use of a wheeled-chair, but neither that nor the presence of four-score years stood between her and the earnest discharge of what she regarded as her Sovereign duties.

Madrigal and song rose on the still May morning air, and she listened closely, now and then exchanging a word with her ladies. It would not have been the historic, "We are not amused," with which she silenced an unfortunate courtier, too anxious to be interesting. Perhaps it was just recognition of the words of one piece, or the music of another piece, and certainly it was smiling appreciation, in particular, of an additional stanza written by the late Mr. Arthur C. Benson for this Windsor rendering of her "Jubilee Hymn." It was by her special command that he had composed the verse, and it well caught the solemn, yet glad, note of the occasion :

MY QUEEN VICTORIA

*“ O loving heart, through fourscore years  
Of royal self-surrender,  
Through gracious toil, through faithful tears,  
Most sorrowful, most tender,  
In loving hope, in steadfast might,  
Unnumbered hearts enfold Her  
On to the home of life and light,  
God guard Her, God uphold Her ! ”*

She had lived three great, consecutive, contrasting pictures : from childhood to blithesome youth ; from youth to sorrowful middle age ; from middle age to venerable and venerated old age, and she had been mistress of them all. “ We see,” wrote Mr. Benson and the late Viscount Esher when they edited the first series of her “ Letters,” “ one of highly vigorous and active temperament, of strong affections and with a deep sense of responsibility, placed at an early age, and after a quiet girlhood, in a position, the greatness of which it is impossible to exaggerate. We see her character expand and develop, schooled by mighty experience into patience and sagacity and wisdom, and yet never losing a particle of the strength, the decision and the devotion with which she had been originally endowed.” That is a prose version of the stanza with which the “ Jubilee Hymn ” ended

## HER MAJESTY'S THANKS

at Windsor Castle on the morn of her eightieth year. Its thought was still in our minds as we listened to the last madrigal of this touching Victorian serenade ; listened and then waited.

Silence, an expectant silence, and the venerable Queen appeared at one of the windows of her Oak Room and bowed her thanks. She was not content to do that only, but said, simply, feelingly and audibly, " I am very much obliged to you all." It was still the voice of music and majesty, and not until a year later was it quenched in death, the only adventure that could be greater than Queen Victoria's life.

## XV. A VICTORIAN PEEP-SHOW

*Coleridge and "Old Fang"; Dean Stanley, Charles Spurgeon and other divines; Holman Hunt and "Israel a Nation"; Cardinal Vaughan and world peace; Henry Russell and "Cheer, Boys, Cheer"; and Lord Randolph Churchill and "Labour."*

AN interesting thing about the Eighteen-Nineties and the Nineteen-Hundreds was that they still held on to the old men who had made history and at the same time welcomed the young men who were to make it. This bridge worked in Fleet Street, which is a lighthouse alike on the past and the future, for he who runs reads a newspaper, whether he studies books or not. There have been highly placed men who said they did neither, but they were only telling a story, which anybody can do.

A veteran celebrity of the City of London, famous for his good stories, a different matter, was "Hang-Theology-Rogers," otherwise the Rev. William Rogers, Rector of St. Botolph's, Bishopsgate. On some occasion he had said, as he told me,

“ Hang the theological question, hang the economical question, let’s get on.” He and the Premier Earl of Rosebery were friends, with a common sense of humour to hold them that. Many a quip and crank they had, but what we are at is the circumstance that, as a boy, “ Hang-Theology-Rogers ” had known Coleridge, the poet.

“ Oh yes,” he told me, “ he was intimate with my father, and used to come and sit in our place in Bloomsbury, and afterwards at Hampstead, for whole days. Almost I can still see him, with his mass of white hair, and looking altogether a poet. He was, I learned by my boyhood acquaintance with him, very fond of children, and he would chat amiably to us by the hour.”

Many writers contemporary with Coleridge visited “ Hang-Theology’s ” father, who was one of the police magistrates at the ancient court in Hatton Garden. “ Often, when I was home from school on holidays,” he said, “ I went to the court with my father, and I saw Charles Dickens, who was then a reporter there. No doubt he got his inspiration for Old Fang, in ‘ Oliver Twist,’ from another police magistrate who was on the bench at the same time as my father.” “ Hang-Theology ” pulled at his memory for the name—Lang—Mr. Lang—and having got it filled out this Dickensian page :



“ The Police Court at Hatton Garden was very small and there were waits between the hearing of cases. The only accommodation, apart from the court-room, was a waiting-room, and it was, somehow, thought rather unsanitary. The gatherings in it were sometimes motley, as you can imagine, and vinegar was burned to keep down the smell. During the waits my father invited the reporters to stay in the court-room, and he would sit chatting with them. But Lang, when he was on duty, turned them out of the court-room into the smelly waiting-room or the draughty passages, and that contributed to Dickens’s picture of Old Fang.”

All Fleet Street could not rescue that story to-day, because the testifier has long been no more, nor could it go, however post haste, to Tunbridge Wells, and hear, from the Rev. Dr. John Stoughton, then retired and eighty-six, reminiscences of the funeral of William IV and the coronation of Queen Victoria. More, he remembered the arrival of the news of the Battle of Waterloo at Norwich when he was a boy. It was brought by the mail-coach and a whole to-do of rejoicing followed, with flags and banners flying in the day-time and at night a huge bonfire, in which an effigy of “ Nap ” was burned.

Naturally, Dr. Stoughton knew most of the great preachers who gave pulpit eloquence to

Queen Victoria's reign, especially the Nonconformists, a word which now is almost as little used as the expression, "Nonconformist conscience." There was Jay of Bath, who was a "Dr.," and said, "I only call myself Doctor when I am travelling, because as such I find the porters take more care of my luggage." There were James of Birmingham, Raffles of Liverpool, Binney, Guthrie, Irving, Chalmers and other lights of earnest evangelistic religion.

Binney, Dr. Stoughton recalled, was tall and majestic, with a masculine intellect and a gift for interesting young men. Guthrie's strong point was his felicity of illustration, but he got rather deaf, and after meeting Queen Victoria at Princess Louise's marriage to the Marquis of Lorne, he said, "She was very gracious, but I really could not catch her remarks." Irving, tall and with heavy, black hair falling over his shoulders, looked like one of the old prophets risen from the dead. Chalmers was so troubled by his popularity that once, to make a diversion, he announced, "Next Sunday I shall preach the same sermon again." Next Sunday came, and so did a still larger congregation, but not many parsons, even the Victorians of a religious age, have had an experience like that.

Old Dr. Stoughton's roll of friends included

Dean Hook, "a brother historian"; Archbishop Tait, thoughtful and shrewd; Archbishop Magee, extraordinarily eloquent and rapid of speech; and Dean Stanley, whom he often visited. "He would come up to my bedroom, stand against the mantelpiece and tell me stories. He was not witty in the ordinary sense, but he had a most pleasant narrative humour." These were English Churchmen, and for the Roman Church there was Cardinal Manning, always soft and amiable, a statesman in handling affairs and a diplomat. Back again to Nonconformity with Spurgeon, whose rich, natural humour was a definite element in his success as a preacher, though, said Dr. Stoughton, "His sledge-hammer style of disposing of a point was, perhaps, too much for some hearers."

Spurgeon, at the Metropolitan Tabernacle, in a drab, frowsy corner of London, was one of its "lions" until the early 'Nineties, when he died in the south of France. His father, the Rev. John Spurgeon, who survived him, had some revealing memories for me of his greater son, as a boy. He was found one day in the manger of a stable addressing an imaginary congregation, and he was still young when he became "converted." On a Sunday morning he attended the Primitive Methodist Chapel at Colchester and heard a local preacher



*Passmore and Alabaster.*

*Charles Haddon Spurgeon, the Victorian Preacher*



expound the text, "Look unto Me." In the evening he attended the Colchester Baptist Chapel with his mother, and afterwards the family sat at home reading the Bible and talking.

"Come, boys," said the father eventually, "it's time to go to bed," and Charles answered, "I don't want to go to bed yet ; I want to speak with you." They spoke far into the night, Charles saying, "I found salvation in the text of this morning, and in the text of this evening, 'Accepted in the beloved,' I have found pardon and peace." Father and son joined in prayer, for to both it was as if Christ were come to them in Essex.

A long-ago spiritual tale that, but perhaps it has never been thus told before ; and the hearing of it at all could only have been Victorian. For then religion was a crusade, whose knights proclaimed their battles, and Charles Spurgeon was a powerful soldier of the Cross, as he understood it. Moreover, in a literal as well as in a spiritual sense, "He, being dead yet speaketh," because his sermons continued to appear weekly, long after his death, and to-day they and his "John Ploughman's Talk" are still in world-wide demand.

"The Light of the World !" That is the famous picture by Holman Hunt, the Pre-Raphaelite artist, and to recall it and him is to make a link with diverse

Victorian people and events. For one thing he cried in the wilderness that Israel should be replanted in Palestine, and to-day this is an actuality.

"You see," said Holman Hunt to myself, "I lived a great deal in Jerusalem in connection with my work as a painter, and the sentiment and practicability of the idea struck me there." He spoke of the beauty which would lie in the realisation of the Scriptural prophecy and of the immense appeal there would be to men's hearts and minds in the coming, at last, of the Jews into the Promised Land. Here was prophecy based on Scripture and the crumbling of the Turkish Empire of "Abdul-the-Damned," as Sir William Watson indicted that Sultan in a well-remembered series of poems.

Holman Hunt, in his artist's house in Kensington, looked the prophet as well as the artist, gentle, dreamy, benevolent, with the full beard of Victorianism, in his case grown from brown to grey. He was not even then the only prophet, nor perhaps was he the first prophet, of Israel to become a nation again. Merely I cite him, having met him, as one more striking witness to the ideas and plans for a different, and, as was hoped, better world, which were germinating in his later years.

"Laurence Oliphant," he told me, "had a scheme for raising capital in order to get land for

settling the Jews in Palestine, and I once talked with him about it in the Athenæum Club. A somewhat similar notion was associated with Dr. Theodore Herz, at least in so far as it would leave the Turk in control. Now I hold,” and the artist of “The Light of the World” spoke boldly, “that you may as well do nothing if you leave the Turk with any power whatever in Palestine.” He must go, in the Shakespearean phrase, “bag and baggage,” which Gladstone made a slogan and which was here used by another Victorian who had the fire of ideals in him.

The New Palestine of the Jews has not come as Holman Hunt heralded and argued it, but out of the volcano of the Great War. Prophets, however, are justified by the things they prophesy, not by the manner of their arrival, and that calls up the League of Nations. True, it is post-Armageddon in its being, but were the seeds of it not sown in the last years of the nineteenth century by England and America when they were discussing an arbitration treaty? About it I had a conversation with that most English Prince of the Church of Rome, Cardinal Vaughan, and his personality and presence linger like a picture with me.

He belonged to an old aristocratic English family, and he looked the lineage, especially in his



Cardinal's robes, but he was courteous and friendly as well as courtly. There could not be a greater contrast than that between him and the ascetic, almost haggard Manning whom he succeeded, but his outlook in some things was not less sympathetic and anticipatory. So he was all for arbitration as the way to settle disputes between nations, not by resort to arms. So, also, the English-speaking nations, by showing the way, were being worthy of their great mission in the world. It was "blazing" the path along which civilisation should march, and in that it meant a new blessing for mankind.

We have, since then, travelled roughly, may be, but far, on this road, and it is gracious to go back to men who had to do with the setting out. Take as a cross-light in it all that early Victorian master of English melody, Henry Russell, and what he told me; that the ever-popular song, "Cheer, Boys, Cheer!" was intended to keep merry the hearts of British people, who, when it was written, were emigrating in crowds to America.

Emigrate! Tear up homes! Break up families! Send our best folk over-sea! And thus solve social problems in the Old Country, by evading them! A harsh doctrine, in line with hard-faced Victorian capitalism, and the tears of it are still salt in many a family. It would sound a strange doctrine to-day,

but then Henry Russell, father of William Clark Russell, the sea novelist, also sang of "A Good Time Coming."

It is a gleam on the condition behind mid-Victorian emigration that the composer of "Cheer, Boys, Cheer!" and his friend, Charles Mackay, its writer, sold the music and the words for half a guinea. "Not an extraordinary sum," Henry Russell recalled with a laugh, "for a song which goes round the world and back again. But as times then were with us, a guinea was a lot to get for a song and music, and as you understand, we did not always get it. The Crimean War was on, and "Cheer, Boys, Cheer!" was for our soldiers there and going there, as well as for civilians emigrating. A bare time for living, in general, but Henry Russell struck into it with the cheerful notes of "Britannia, the Pride of the Ocean," and "A Life on the Ocean Wave," which he composed in America and dedicated to Fenimore Cooper, the novelist.

He had the good cheer of other eminent friendships; Thackeray, who was amiable, though he could be satirical in conversation; Bulwer Lytton, who had a fine conceit of himself, yet an attractive personality; Landseer and Cattermole among artists, and among the Victorian humorists, Mark Lemon. Also Russell was chorus-master at the old

Her Majesty's Theatre in the Haymarket, when Taglioni danced and Jenny Lind, the "Swedish Nightingale," sang there. Of the first he said that she was a beautiful woman with a handsome figure, a superb grace of carriage and a dainty modesty in her dancing. Of the second that she was rather plain in appearance but singularly kind and winning ; and oh, her singing !

Every age, no matter what it may be otherwise, sees some art perfectly achieved, and always there is the tramp of mankind marching forward, though it may not always be heard. A British Labour Party which might become the British Government would have been a wild dream in the placid, keep-your-place Eighteen-Fifties, but signs of it became apparent to close observers in the Eighteen-Nineties. Perhaps Lord Randolph Churchill had the second-sight which is foresight in a statesman ; anyhow, it was about the faintly stirring tide of Labour as a political force, that I saw him at his house in Connaught Place, near the Marble Arch.

Mr. Winston Churchill's father was, in some ways, even a more remarkable man than he is, and we know his many sides. Lord Randolph had the same original and imaginative mind, the same courage and dash and the same faith in his own star. He had not the son's literary gift, or at all events

he did not prove it in many books. But he was a devouring reader of anything that interested him, from a blue-book to a sensational novel. A London bookseller who knew him well said that literally he tore through the pages of a work and mentally tore the heart out of it. What was the attitude of a mind so acquiring, to the Labour Movement then beginning, as, looking backward, we can now clearly perceive ?

Lord Randolph stood up from a sort of desk-table at which he had been sitting and which was covered with books and papers, and said pleasantly, " Good morning ; take a chair." He was older in years, and much older in appearance, than when he inspired the Fourth Party in the House of Commons. Much had happened since he resigned the Chancellorship of the Exchequer, forgetting Goschen, and causing his chief, the Marquis of Salisbury, to say, or so it was gossiped, " Like a carbuncle ; better without it." But Lord Randolph had just returned from a rest holiday in Egypt, and he was bronzed of face and keen of eye.

His windows looked across Hyde Park, and while he chatted he would now and then turn towards the greenery of the grass and the fragrance of the trees. A lady, striking in face and figure, came in, passed a smiling word with him and was gone again

like a vision. It was Lady Randolph, whose bright mind, housing a natural literary expression, mingles with that of Lord Randolph in their eldest son. If he does not inherit her wonderful good looks, perhaps it is on the just ruling of Providence that it is not well for mortals to have everything, even when they mean to be immortals.

“Labour” was a stranger word than “Trade-Unionist” in the 'Nineties, and “Socialist” simply meant a red flag in Hyde Park and rioting in Trafalgar Square. Not, however, in that raw way, to Lord Randolph, who discussed them with his quick flair and his penetrating intelligence. He sketched, in brief, sharply cut sentences, a good deal of what was actually to happen in English labour and public life. He cultivated no mantle of the prophet, had no consciousness of the seer with an inward voice, but he brought a subtle and dexterous intellect to bear on the gleams and shadows of a moving democracy. Between his thought and his word there was an instant community, and a slight roughness of voice only seemed to emphasise what he said.

The Whiggism of Trade Unionism would be supplanted by a more democratic, more embracing labour movement, and it would eventually, no doubt, take in what was called “Socialism.” This was so

wide a term that it might mean anything, or, on the other hand, nothing in particular, but why make it a bugbear? Himself, he was for taking whatever good there might be in so-called Socialism and leaving the rest alone. Why miss a common benefit, from whatever faith it sprang; because the natural law of the human race was progress.

One resurrects those notes of memory alike as prophetic echoes from the past, and as an immediate mirror of Lord Randolph Churchill's personality and its atmosphere in his closing years. His heavy moustache, latterly supported by a beard, was in accordance with the military traditions of the house of Marlborough, likewise his hair, worn short and parted in the middle. Otherwise he was all mental and temperamental, even, may be, sometimes a "bundle of nerves," not easy to handle by the heavy-weights he encountered on his political pilgrimage. But how stimulating he must have been at his best, and it was luck to meet him on the one-time rounds of Fleet Street.

## XVI. HEROES AND HERO WORSHIP

*Arctic and Pacific story-tellers ; pawky Piper Findlater, V.C. ; tragic Sir Hector Macdonald ; bold Sir Ernest Shackleton ; Viking Dr. Nansen ; mandarinish Li Hung Chang, and the kidnapping of Sun Yat Sen in London Town.*

THESE are heroes of the hour who go out in smoke, sometimes even in fire, and there are the real heroes who achieve difficulty and remain ; and a man of Fleet Street comes into contact with both sorts, to his own diversion and enlightenment.

Of the former, Dr. Cook, the American, who emerged from the ice barriers of the North Pole and swore he had been to it, was a prime example. He might have got away with it, for a time, if Sir Philip Gibbs, as a special correspondent, urged by an eager News Editor, had not fallen on him. Cook was ingratiating, had a well-told tale, and there is, in human nature, an innate desire to exalt a hero. But he had vulnerable points, as when he spoke of one of the Eskimo companions in his journey as " Took-

'is-'ook," or something which became that, and he and his yarn collapsed.

Louis de Rougemont, with his wonderful tales from the Pacific, was another example of the hero, become only a notoriety. Somehow he was rather a likeable fellow and, as we now know the world, not the brazen romancer he was condemned as being. If he had used his own queer experiences as the basis of stories he would probably have done very well. He found that while people say, "Truth is stranger than fiction," they refuse to accept it in practice.

His "flying wombats" and his other miracles, in the loose way he subscribed them as facts, invited examination, and he was a bad witness. Therefore he missed being the author of a new "Robinson Crusoe," and fell into the not quite deserved company of Munchausen. With all this Henry Massingham had most to do, and those of us who were his colleagues will remember the resourcefulness of mind and the mastery of presentation which made the de Rougemont affair a classic "thriller" of Fleet Street.

Especially my way came as modest and true a hero as ever there was, Piper Findlater, of the Gordon Highlanders, who though wounded, sat up and piped the "Cock o' the North" while they



charged the Afridis at Dargai. His exploit fired the fancy of the British people, and he swam in much print, including a stirring poem in which Sir Henry Newbolt sang, "Gay go the Gordons to a fight."

When the piper came home, still ill from his wound, Queen Victoria honoured him in hospital and gave him the V.C. She could be queenly gracious and never more the Sovereign, because also the sovereign woman, than when she was pinning the great, little medal, called after herself, on a soldier's breast. A proud thing that, but Piper Findlater made as little of his acclamation as he did of his wound, and indeed, for all his mastery of a chanter, he could not blow a hero's horn at all.

He was just one of those northern folk who encrust the job, whatever it happens to be, with a touch of idealism and another touch of humour. "Aye," he said to me, from his soldier's bed at Haslar, "they're makin' a great fuss about a sma' thing. What wid ony Hielan piper de if he wis knocked ower and couldna' pipe the men forrit, but sit up and pipe ahin' them." A plain, simple fellow, he understood plain, simple work and conduct, and he went back to those from whom he had come, unsophisticated and unspoilt, surely the happiest fate of a hero.

Alas ! this was not so with another Highlander

of rank and fame in our military life, Sir Hector Macdonald, whom I met on various occasions. He came of a good farmer family in Ross-shire, 'listed in the Gordon Highlanders, whom Jean Gordon, the famous Duchess, first enrolled with a shilling kissed from her lips, and was one of the devoted little band who held Majuba Hill to the bitter end. Its name has almost died away on the obliterating and reconciling lips of time, but once it stood for many things.

A Macdonald with a Christian name like Hector could only be a soldier born, as poets are born, not merely made. He went to Egypt and took an increasing hand in the successive battles waged there by Kitchener for the reconquest of the Soudan. At Omdurman Macdonald's Brigade, with "Fighting Mac," as he came to be called, at its head, and his own head as cool as if it were packed in ice, gave a vital stroke for victory and he became an heroic as well as a romantic figure.

We cheered him when he came home, wrote verses about his deeds, banqueted him, gave him a sword of honour, but never stole from him the amused, quizzical, grave twinkle in his brave, dark eyes. It said, in so many words, "I've had a mighty fine time soldiering, and I like your kenspeckle Scots faces around me, but let's be humble

about it all and get on with the next thing." For him that was an appointment in India, from which, a dramatic gesture, he was urgently called to command the Highland Brigade in the South African War.

After it he went to Ceylon, and from the military command there he one day arrived hurriedly, unexpectedly, in London. Just what happened in Ceylon, and then with Earl Roberts, the Commander-in-Chief, in London, outsiders never knew, but it broke the heart of a great man, for Hector Macdonald went over to Paris and shot himself. He took the way out which we associate with the old chivalry of Japan, and no man can give his country more than his life. He is buried in the ancient capital of his native Scotland, and a pilgrim to its beautiful War Shrine on the Castle Rock will read his name into it as that of one who, had he lived longer, might have played a great part in Armageddon.

At one time Sir Ernest Shackleton was constantly in and out of a daily newspaper office in Fleet Street, and a word with him on the stairs, or a talk with him in one of the editorial rooms, was almost an item of the day. He looked all the traveller and explorer ; big and powerful in build, as if to rough-hew the earth ; daring of eye, with a gay

humour in it ; resolute of face, as a commander should be ; yet in his walk, his bearing, and his mental and spiritual countenance, quietly refined.

He was a good and ardent reader, had adapted the knowledge thus won to himself, and he liked to talk about books. Robert Browning was not only his favourite English poet, but almost his literary god. His subtle readings and sonorous renderings of him might have enlightened and certainly would have stirred the one-time Browning Society. He always took his thumb-ed and scored edition of the poet with him on his expeditions, and no doubt it keeps him company in his lonely Antarctic vigil.

At a dinner-party Shackleton's talk was the delight of men and the adoration of women, for whom he had a high chivalry and a great attraction. No wonder. Outwardly, physically, he was as a heart's god of women ; shapely, massive, sinewy, sure of himself, conquering ; one who could " treat 'em rough " and be loved for it. Inwardly he had the soul of a child and a poet, so that in him the barrow-hole of the ancient " cave-man " became a beautiful shrine in which a noble spirit burned. What personality could more interest and stir all the folds of sex and sweetnesses which make the enigmatic, eternal woman ?

" Of Nansen and the North, sing the glorious

day's renown ! " After a talk with Dr. Fridtjof Nansen, who often came to London, one somehow thought of the ballad about " Nelson and the North." He was such a splendid Northerner, such an ideal Norseman, such a complete Viking of old, in modern life. Salute him as a stranger from " Norroway o'er the faem " and he would quote you the rest of " Sir Patrick Spens," and then say, in his sunny, merry way, " A stranger ! But you wouldn't call me a stranger, would you ? "

His stature, even in old age, when he went about healing the wounds of the Great War, was striking without being imposing, a cold word, fit only for a cold nature, not for him. His heart and his mind were large and generous, like his body, and they kept it active, even vigorous. When he was young and as erect as a six-foot oak sapling, he must have given the impression of whalebone lashed with whipcord.

That was when he took his little ship " Fram " into the icy wastes of the Arctic and after many adventures returned to describe them. He had hit upon a new idea of which I remember the words of his own description :

" To build a strong vessel—the ' Fram,' Anglicised ' Forward '—which would not crush in the ice ; to go north, on the Europeo-Asiatic side, as

far as possible in the summer ; then to strike into the ice and drift with what I believe to be a current, across the Polar regions to the Greenland side."

If he got to the Pole, so much the better, but his purpose was to make scientific investigations ; and his book " Farthest North," still so readable as a narrative, shows how valuable these were. He did not get to the North Pole itself, and yet, above others who did, we confer its white ribbon of knighthood on him. Why ? Because Nansen was a great gentleman as well as a great explorer, like our own Captain Scott, holder of the same precious order for the South Pole.

They would, perhaps, have found it hard to explain themselves to the Chinese mind of Li Hung Chang, another world character encountered in the discharge of Fleet Street missions. Nay, two or three weeks were spent in attendance on him and his doings when he came here, desirous to see England at first-hand. Hero, or Eastern historic figure ? He was both, in the Old China of the Manchu dynasty, and only the famous Dowager-Empress, Cathay's Queen Elizabeth and Queen Victoria rolled in one, surpassed him in interest and importance to the Western World.

What a striking character he was, either in Carlton House Terrace, where we gave him splendid

lodging, or on the move in London. He did something the day after he arrived which, perhaps, rudely expressed his stoical indifference to the Philistines of

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*The signature of Li Hung Chang, written when he was in England, with a delicate little brush, the Chinese way.*

the West. He was in a royal landau, and he wore his coloured Chinese silks and satins and his mandarin's cap, with its peacock feathers. A crowd, attracted mostly, perhaps, by curiosity, awaited him

in Carlton House Terrace, and what do you think he did, consciously or unconsciously? He leant over the side of the carriage and blew his nose with his fingers, making such a crack in the still, expectant atmosphere, that a pistol might have been fired.

Li Hung, as he quickly got to be called, never ceased to ask questions of whoever he met, or about whatever he saw, for he was a stern realist. He established himself as a first-class inquisitor, and often his questions were pointed with an exquisite awkwardness. He visited Gladstone at Hawarden Castle, but on that occasion he showed how gracious and courtly he could be, without abating one whit of his curiosity.

He only spoke Chinese, and the English "Grand Old Man" was by then rather deaf, so Private Secretary Lo Feng Luh had a hard business translating them to each other. There they sat, the two foremost elder statesmen of the West and the East, exchanging ideas and experiences, while we all stood around in the Hawarden drawing-room. After tea, which Li Hung Chang drank and praised, an unusual gesture for his Chinese stoicism, there was more conversation, and at the end of it Gladstone and his wife accompanied their guest to the door of Hawarden Castle and saw him depart.

My own last sight of the rugged old Chinaman



was at Southampton, where he embarked for America, and a particular little incident stamps his departure on the mind. He had yielded Fleet Street much "good copy," and Lo Feng Luh, who had been educated in England, was the resourceful, humorous and altogether human channel who had distilled it to us. He was not only a perfect private secretary to Li Hung Chang, but almost a second ambassador speaking for the East to the West.

We were all so grateful and admiring, especially when, at our request, he wrote us a farewell message to England from his master, that we had a bright idea. We composed a round robin to the Foreign Office suggesting that Lo Feng Luh should be honoured in some British way for his very real services towards Anglo-Chinese friendship. Not long after he was offered a knighthood, and he bore it with distinction when, later, and more dignified but always affable, he returned to London as Chinese Minister.

Already the writing was on the wall of the Old China, and a London affair of which I was a close witness will always be a dramatic chapter in the record of Sun Yat Sen, the founder of the New China. It was an epic of the complete hero and also an epic of Fleet Street journalism, for never has there been a true tale which so beats all the inven-

tions of all the sensational novelists, from Edgar Allen Poe to Dumas, and from "Sherlock Holmes" to Mr. Edgar Wallace.

Who could have conceived such a deeply laden story? for if Sun Yat Sen had gone out then, there probably would not to-day be the vast and vastly potential Republic of China. It certified that when it laid him, as its Father and first President, to rest for ever, in a splendid marble mausoleum on the slopes of Purple Mountain, overlooking the tombs of the Ming Emperors. This was his consecration to the ages by a grateful country, and now the name of Sun Yat Sen can never die, though in London he nearly did.

As a young man, with a Western education and leanings, he was for progress in China, and that meant being a rebel against the ancient regime and the ancient mandarins. He had many adventures and vicissitudes, and from the worst of them he found shelter in Hong Kong, a British possession. There he went on with his gospel of China for the Chinese people, nor did he forget it when he came to London on a visit. But the Old Lady of Peking, or her satraps, kept a covetous and designing eye on him, and this was how, in quiet, dignified Portland Place, where nothing unusual should happen, he had the full adventure even of his full life.

Naturally, he met other Chinese in London, and one afternoon, a Sunday, I seem to recollect, he took a walk with several of these in Regent's Park. Then they all strolled down Portland Place, and as they passed the Chinese Legation there, the door opened and his supposed friends shot him inside before he knew where he was. Once within he was on Chinese territory, for it is a condition of international diplomacy that the residence of an ambassador or a minister is not amenable to the ordinary laws of the country where it may be. Sun Yat Sen was aware of this, and he had time, in the top room, wherein he was promptly lodged, at the Chinese Legation, to think out what it might mean to him.

His room was at the back of the building, looking more or less in the direction of a house in Devonshire Street, where Dr. James Cantlie, not then knighted, lived and practised. He had, for years before, lived and practised in Hong Kong, and it was there he and his friend Sir Patrick Manson acquired their mastery of tropical medicine. Sun Yat Sen knew Dr. Cantlie in Hong Kong, and indeed their original personalities and mental characteristics, the one a Scot, the other a Chinaman, had made them good friends. Here was succour if it could be reached, but how?—for the Chinese rebel was, in effect, in prison, and the Scots doctor

was half a street away, knowing nothing of what had happened to his Hong Kong friend.

Sun Yat Sen thought and thought, as he afterwards told us, and then among his personal possessions he found a scrap of paper and a pencil. He



The image shows a handwritten signature in cursive script, "Sun Yat-sen", followed by the Chinese characters "孫逸仙" (Sun Yat-sen) written vertically in a traditional style.

*Sun Yat Sen's autograph, in English and Chinese, as he wrote both immediately after his great adventure in London.*

wrote a brief message on one side of the little sheet, saying where he was, and on the other side the address of Dr. Cantlie in Devonshire Street and a request to any finder to take it there. Then he doubled over the leaf, twisted its ends and threw it as far as he could out of the high-up window. He saw it flutter away on the winds of Heaven and they were a Heaven's Providence to it, for, by some extraordinary chance, the message was picked up and brought to Dr. Cantlie, who opened it and—understood !

What to do? And to do it quickly! Dr. Cantlie remembered that Mr. Henry Norman, then also untitled, whom he had met in Hong Kong, was the Literary Editor of the "Daily Chronicle." He went to Fleet Street to acquaint him with what had happened, but found he was out of town. Eventually he took his news to the Foreign Office or to Scotland Yard, and either through this, or from him directly, the old, pink "Globe" evening paper got wind of it. Out it came with the story, and instantly every Chief Reporter in Fleet Street—for the more exalted term, News Editor, had not come in then—put his best young men on it.

Probably there were a dozen of us clustered about the door of the Chinese Legation when half as many detectives arrived from Scotland Yard. The affair had been submitted to the Marquis of Salisbury, as Foreign Secretary, diplomatic privilege being involved, although it had not, possibly, been claimed. Anyhow, in this business, really the kidnapping of a man on political grounds, there could be no nonsense, and Scotland Yard was instructed to rescue Sun Yat Sen, whatever the consequences. At the time popular imagination made the order, "Rescue him, by force if necessary, dead or alive"; so anything might happen.

We were the "Flying Squad" of Scotland

Yard and the "Flying Squad" of Fleet Street, there, again, anticipating a name which now means "something doing," a "certain liveliness" somewhere, or anywhere. Poor Sir Halliday Macartney received us, and he could never have had a more disagreeable job in his long service as British Counsellor to the Chinese Legation. We saw nothing of the Minister, whoever he may then have been, and only a whisk of the pig-tails and silks of alarmed and curious junior members of the Legation. The chief Scotland Yard officer, courteous of speech but resolute, tendered his authority for being there and demanded Sun Yat Sen. There was a pause for some awkward moments, and then a rather short, well-built Chinaman came down the stairs with a bewildered, inquiring smile on his face.

It was Sun Yat Sen, brought from his top back room, where the hours had been as complete a blank to him as they had been an ordeal. He could not tell, when he was summoned to descend, whether it meant rescue or another step towards Old China, the Old Empress and the mandarins. But his eager, intellectual face quickly took in the situation, and the uncertainty in his smile gave place to sunny relief. One could not say he was handed over to the Scotland Yard men, because they just took their departure as courteously as they

had come, and took him with them. Outside the Legation, on British soil, he was a free man again, and we celebrated his deliverance and heard his own story in a little hostelry down Charing Cross way.

Sun Yat Sen had no doubt at all that the plan, whatever Chinese agent may have conceived it, was to entrap him and send him back to his native land. Alive? Then to be judged by those who had pursued him so desperately, and, of course, swiftly executed.

Dead? What more simple? since Chinamen abroad, never losing their ancestor-worship, are in the habit of being taken home for burial. If another coffin passed eastward, in some ship, who was to know that Sun Yat Sen, the arch rebel, was in it, rebellious no more? He counted it a miracle that he was able to tell us his adventure, and to some of us, in token of the happy deliverance, he gave his picturesque Chinese autograph, which now will have its value.

## XVII. THE GRAND EDWARDIAN

*Albert Edward, Prince of Wales, the ruler of English aristocratic society ; and Edward VII, the Sovereign who linked the august queenship of Victoria with the democratic kingship of George V.*

MAY be the story of our time, when it settles into history, will regard Queen Victoria's eldest son and heir in two clear personal aspects : as a Prince of Wales who, for many years, reigned and ruled socially under that title ; and as King Edward VII, who reigned for only ten years as Sovereign, but, in that time, carved himself and his reign upon the world.

Some people think that it would have been better for the world if his kingship had come sooner. But there were many other people who, when it did come, wondered how the Prince was to conduct the King. At this distance we can perceive that his personality stood not only for himself but, in some measure, for an epoch. Things were broadening out when he came to the English throne, but they still strained at ancient anchors.



My first, youthful, awesome glimpse of Edward the Seventh was among the heathery woods of Deeside, where he was shooting, as the guest of a Scottish nobleman with estates not far from Balmoral. It was largely a pheasant shoot, and I remember how the birds, driven by beaters and a strong wind, came "rocketing" over "The Prince." He was always just that in Victorian conversation, and the short name was both a tribute to H.R.H., confusable with nobody else royal or titled, and to his personal likeableness and popularity.

He was seated, or rather he rested, on one of those spiked walking-sticks which sportsmen stick into the ground and which open out into a small seat at the top. But when the pheasants came faster and faster and the Prince needed the nimblest service two loaders could give him, he stood up for the battue. It was almost that, because he was, though already rather stout, in the prime of his manhood and physical activity and a crack shot.

He wore a knickerbocker suit of a rough, brownish cloth, a soft, greenish hat of the Tyrolean sort, with a jaunty little feather peeping from the ribbon, a stout pair of leggings and heavy black boots. He looked the complete sportsman and absorbed in the game, just as at the off half-hour for lunch he might

have been an affable, chatty, companionable private gentleman. The ladies of the house-party came and joined in the midday meal, so giving it grace and a greater sociability not, perhaps, disagreeable to the chief guest.

Our boyhood memories linger in detail when other memories fade into general pictures, but there could not have been a day in the Eighteen-Nineties when the Prince of Wales was not in the papers of Fleet Street, doing this or that, going here or there, or merely being talked about, because he was always "good copy." American correspondents were especially keen for anything about him, as indeed about royalty generally, for which, perhaps, he chiefly stood to democracy.

A certain Australian Premier, who at one time in his career had been charged with "republican leanings," came to London on a visit. He naturally met the Prince of Wales, who asked him to dinner at Marlborough House and after it gave him one of his own special cigars to smoke. He kept it unsmoked, and took it back to Australia as a great trophy, which it was to the Prince's tact.

His place in the realm was necessarily a platform which exalted him to all the world, but he definitely interested in himself and interested differently. Individuality will assert itself even on the steps of a

throne, as we see afresh in the present Prince of Wales, whose delightful boyhood relationship with his grandfather is reflected in a story that may be recalled without a "Yea" or a "Nay" as to its genuineness.

There was, one heard it told, a family lunch at Buckingham Palace, and "Prince Eddy," then escaping from the nursery, was among those who sat at table with King Edward. He looked up quickly as if to speak, whereupon his grandfather said, in a grandfatherly way, "Little boys should be seen, not heard." When a lull came in the general conversation, the King turned again to him with the other grandfatherly remark, "Now, what were you going to say, David?" "Please, grandpa," was the hurried reply, "it's too late; there was a slug in your salad, and you've eaten him!"

There is also the story of "Prince Eddy" lunching with his grandfather and becoming fidgety when he had finished eating: "Now then, grandpa," he said with a great effort of courage, "you must not sit too long here, or else you'll keep Mr. Hansell waiting." That was his tutor, and it is not every boy who would refuse to keep a tutor and his lessons waiting.

A bouquet of very human anecdotage only grows about a very human being, and from Fleet Street one

had countless opportunities of seeing Edward VII in that light, both as Prince and King. On the throne, as we heard the whispers of it, he could be exacting enough, for, strangely in one who was otherwise most broad-minded, he had a certain spinsterish precision about forms and details, such as the absolute hang of a uniform button or the meticulous drop of a sword. Off the throne he was the "first gentleman in Europe" in courtesy to men and gallantry to women, as well as in carriage and presence. There he showed how a precision for form could also soften it with bonhomie and even, on occasion, throw it to the winds.

Thus his friend, Lord Rosebery, attended a dinner at Windsor Castle in knee breeches, when full Windsor uniform, meaning trousers, had been ordered. "I suppose," King Edward whispered gaily in his ear, "you have come down in the suite of the American Ambassador." What a pity we do not know Lord Rosebery's answer, for it would have been worthy of his ready wit.

Again, a Lord High Steward wanted to know when he could present some official address to King Edward. He was asked if he had it with him, and, answering "Yes," got the request, "Why not present it now?" But the Lord High Steward had not his wand of office, at which information

King Edward exclaimed, "Oh, never mind, take an umbrella," and so the thing was done.

When Gladstone retired from his long, eminent service to the State, Queen Victoria let him go with hardly more than an official word of regret and recognition. That was noticed by the nation, which said to itself, "How different from her attitude to her favourite, Beaconsfield." It also, as his papers modestly testify, hurt Gladstone, an old-fashioned, exemplary loyalist and royalist, alongside his Liberalism for the people. With his flair for something not done, or to be undone, "The Prince" stepped in, and by personal gestures showed how warmly he regarded the White Knight of Hawarden.

What would we not have given to listen to a talk between them, one a Victorian pillar of gathered wisdom, with a radiant voice, the other an accomplished man of the world, whose voice was arresting rather than beautiful. No contrast of minds could have been more challenging, and conversation would have been quickened by their mutual sympathy and understanding. Ancient lights, with a long, steady glow, and new lights shimmering, for the king and architect of the Edwardians was intuitively modern in the sense that action, small or large, was his line, not theory, supported by encyclopædic reading.

He was, we well understood, no fond lover or natural judge of books, and "The Corsican Brothers" was supposed to be his favourite play; but then immediate information and actual drama were his at first-hand. His post-bag had close contact with every "seat of the mighty" in the Old World and the New World, and there wasn't a public celebrity, royalty or commoner, whom he could not tap on the shoulder and say, "Well, now, what's this you are up to? Tell me about it."

So it was not necessary for him to read learned books or attend grave plays, but what material for both must have been tumbled in on him from private sources. We may be sure he never thought of things in that literary light, and indeed kings and queens with highly intellectual tastes are not shown, by history, to have necessarily added to their own happiness or to the happiness of their people. But ever and always Edward could be the encouraging patron, and there is a tale, heard at the time and kept till now, which illustrates this in a diverting fashion.

It was a lunch to mark the completion of the "Dictionary of National Biography," a great book which we owe to the late Mr. George Smith, a princely London publisher if ever there was one. True, he made a lucky investment in a mineral

water, still going strong, and he nobly spent his profits, and probably thousands more, on the making of the "Dictionary." Sir Leslie Stephen was its first editor, and he was followed by Sir Sidney Lee, two good literary knights, and George Smith would have been a third, as everybody believed, or even a baronet, had he not died while the honour was almost on its way to him.

Albert Edward, Prince of Wales, a designation to which young ears are perhaps strangers, accepted an invitation to the lunch and made a little speech, which pleased even a company of "high-brows." His quality, as what the Americans call a "good mixer," ensured that, and his gift for a dignified intimacy which could be cordial, yet warned off familiarity, made the occasion both royal and human. Sitting beside Sir Sidney Lee, and talking easily, he asked, "And what is your speciality in literature?"

"I suppose, sir," was the modest answer, "it's Shakespeare."

"A good fellow, Shakespeare," came the comment; "stick to him."

Either the Prince did not know that Sir Sidney Lee had written the classic English biography of Shakespeare, or, being a born, inquiring diplomatist, he was just asking. He could not have foreseen then that Sir Sidney was to write his "Life" as Prince



*A. Stuart Wortley*

*By courtesy of Henry Graves*

*Edward VII, with the Order of the Garter*



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of Wales and as King Edward VII, and that again is a case of how things come about. For no man, however under Providence and circumstances he may control his career on earth, can tell just how and by whom only, the story of it will be written in after years.

A memoir, study and estimate of King Edward was done, following his death, by Sir Sidney Lee for supplementary volumes of the "Dictionary of National Biography." This memoir, an individual, detached effort to assess the King, was afterwards published as a book and had a large sale. King George, it was said, made the criticism that it did not, in many things, manifest full information, and, indeed, being without official authority, how could it? Certainly Queen Alexandra objected to this sketch of her husband, and her advisers wanted various other people, who had known him, to write a reply, but nothing came of that.

The end of the business was an offer to Sir Sidney Lee, of access to King Edward's papers, if he would rewrite his monograph into an adequate biography, and of course he grasped the chance, and a two-volume work resulted. Thus out of, may be, an adverse wind there blew a prosperous one, and authors, though a meritorious and deserving race, are not always so lucky, though, happily, they remain hopeful.

Some day, when the ink of history has dried, there must be a definitive "Life of King Edward VII," but most of his contemporaries will then be gone. As it is, you only now and then sight in London somebody wearing what he wore in his most familiar aspect.

Striped or grey trousers, creased down the side, a peculiarity of his, or alternately down the front, like most people; an all-square frock-coat, silk trimmed on the lapels, and with, most likely, a carnation button-holed there, or in later years, when fashion changed, a morning coat; and in either case, a faultless, shining, tall hat, worn with the faintest, because unconscious, suggestion of a tilt. The tilt was there, too, and more piquant, when he wore a bowler and a lounge suit, as he did if the occasion was a purely personal one, or if he was travelling.

Was his tilted hat the ancestry of the nice tilt of a modern soft-felt, which we associate with his oldest grandson? Inheritance in character and characteristics is not less interesting than inheritance in station, and more delicate and subtle. Certainly the tilt is not new but Edwardian, and Earl Beatty, who also has it, proves that, for he goes back even to the Victorian Age.

Edwardian costume, though heavy on men or women, could be smart as a first impression, as well

as elegant under a leisurely study. It is not so much what clothes are, as how we wear them, and the Frenchwoman long ago set that lesson to the Englishwoman. Perhaps King Edward, especially in his Princedom, had a real influence in evolving English dress, generally, from the want of taste and, indeed, veritable dowdiness, into which it fell for some Victorian years.

How well he dressed, the illustrated papers showed from week to week, but perhaps his most dramatic appearance in the Fleet Street mirror was the famous baccarat scandal of Eighteen-Ninety. It was not so swift in action as his illness soon after becoming king, the necessity for an instant operation and the postponement of his Coronation. Neither was it framed in purple and gold, like the Coronation itself, after the anxiety of his gradual recovery. All that was in the natural order of human life and kingship, but the baccarat scandal was, by the very surprise of it, revelation, and revelation excites, provokes, even exasperates.

An officer of the Guards, bearer of an old name, friend of the Prince, charged with cheating at cards at a country house-party ; H.R.H. himself one of the players, and later one of the witnesses in court ; why, all the moralities and all the consciences cried

out, some sorrowfully, others angrily. More, the play was with H.R.H.'s own counters, apparently carried about for the purpose ; all surely the most damning evidence of light-hearted depravity in the highest Society !

Really, as he told Archbishop Benson, the counters were carried and used to guard against unduly high play. But how was public opinion to know that, because princes cannot address confidences or explanations to it. Modern public opinion, we may suppose, would judge the whole affair with a larger perspective and less severity. We have learned that we must not be content to locate the mote in another's eye, whoever he may be, and righteously leave it there, but mercifully pick it out for him, if we can.

At all events the Prince of Wales came through this ordeal, as he came through others, without loss of either popularity or prestige, and his very humanness endeared him to doubting subjects. Cards, certainly when they are bridge, have to-day become almost a token of the domestic virtues, if they are not positively a hall-mark of what genuine spinsterhood remains in the world. Thus a talk of a rubber King Edward played, or was said to have played, in a fashionable London house can be told or retold without reflection on anybody.

It was a winter afternoon and getting dark, and the hostess, a witty as well as a beautiful lady, turned to the royal guest and said, "Sir, if you'll allow me, I'll call for lights—I can't distinguish the king from the knave!" He would have nodded his consent with a twinkle in his eye, for he enjoyed a joke even when he was in it, if it did not go too far and be too free. Then? But that's a story which used to be told about another famous beauty and now is discredited, so let it rest.

One has no business to live through a time of history, starred with notable and illustrious figures, and not have some personal ideas about it and them, however imperfect or wrong they may be. Was the Edwardian Princeship, though "cribb'd, cabin'd and confin'd" by the Great Victorian, Queen Victoria, not a humanising influence in a hard, commercial, get-on or get-out England; the England which made Samuel Smiles's "Self Help" a "best-seller"? Was the Edwardian kingship not, by and large, and naturally, rather than deliberately, a stimulating clear-up of the monumental in Victorianism, for it had a lot of that?

You recollect Mr. Lytton Strachey, as he contemplated writing his "Queen Victoria," being supposed to say, "I'm taking a flat opposite the Albert Memorial in Kensington Gardens in order

to do it ! ” That anecdote, of doubtful authenticity, does suggest a pervading note of the Edwardian Princeship and its larger advance in the Edwardian Kingship. For here was a personality in which the last of the Royal Grand Seigneurs united with the first instinctive Sovereign of Democracy.

We are not less king's men than those who went before us, only kingship is different : not a relic of divine right, but the heart of a commonwealth. Almost it proclaims, in a way Tennyson scarcely foresaw, that “ simple faith ” can be more than “ Norman blood,” and clearly this subtle, adaptive change began under the Grand Edwardian. There he was, crowned, sceptred, set apart, but he knew how, when the trumpets sounded, to descend and open the portcullis.

British Sovereign and British people, as we can see now, were to have their full family union that wonderful summer afternoon when King George V returned to London after his long illness and convalescence. Not the outwardness of it all, though that was touching and fine, but the inwardness of it, inspired by the tender motherliness of London. If other capitals have their own qualities, Paris or Vienna, Rome or New York, none of them is so motherly as London. And her fond greeting to King George, Queen Mary and their Royal Family

was also—was it not?—the writing of another historic page in the Golden Book of the English throne and the English people.

Think what a great and beautiful thing came about in our quiet, almost casual, but always instinctively right way. It may not have been apparent at the emotional moment, but historians of England will reflect that while Queen Victoria was the August Monarch and King Edward the Illustrious Sovereign, George V became King of the British Family at home and overseas.

Our great kings and queens have each stood for something individual, and therefore historic, in a far-flung story of Motherland and Empire. Nothing that has been in the past can outmatch, in glorious purport, this modern enthronement of the King as the true head, humanly, of the British Commonwealth, as well as its Sovereign Lord. Thus the British constitution, miraculous because unwritten, evolves with harmony and adapts itself in affection to the needs of the Commonwealth.

The reign of Edward VII was a rich chapter in this happy consolidation, just as it stood for a fresher, better comity with foreign nations. Such is allowed, and other good achievements, but Edwardian Society is charged with various peccadilloes, perhaps truly enough.



Particularly it is said to have had its ugly little foibles, its "red lights," and that to these sins it added the other of hypocrisy. Was there not an American woman doctor, invited to an English country house-party who said, "Well, I was the only lady there who didn't ask for her room to be changed"?

Then Edwardian Society or, in other words, English aristocracy, slowly "crashing," could be self-satisfied and selfish, empty, trivial and wasteful, enjoying itself and thinking nothing of the morrow. But it had individuality and sparkle, dignity and grace, and for these, life being transitory and death eternal, many things can be forgiven.

It could also laugh, not only in private but publicly, having little of the self-consciousness on which vanity thrives. When King Edward's Coronation Procession was in Piccadilly, some man, catching sight of the late Duke of Norfolk, in his cap and robes as Earl Marshal, said, "Bli'me, mate, here's the King o' Clubs."

This struck so perfect a picture of the black-bearded, square-shouldered little Duke, that everyone within earshot laughed loudly. The laughter became a roar of cheers as the newly crowned King of Hearts passed, and when he passed in death, London went black in an hour.

## XVIII. THOMAS HARDY AT HOME

*The famous English novelist in his native Wessex, a homely, simple, shy genius ; and a striking conversation there, about ancient Stonehenge, where his Tess and Angel Clare spent their last hours together.*

“THE years that take the best away, Give something in the end.” It is not always like that in Fleet Street, Rupert Brooke. But it does give opportunities for precious things, and my first meeting with Thomas Hardy came that way.

Stonehenge for sale ! Stonehenge in the market ! This was the rumour and alarm, one fine afternoon of the dying nineteenth century, and naturally it set the country agog. We may keep our national sentiment deep down in us, but when it stirs, it stirs the more for that reason.

“ God knows,” wrote Samuel Pepys, after a visit to the relics of the Temple of the Winds on Salisbury Plain, “ what their use was. They are hard to tell and yet may be told.”

We know far more about them than was known

in his age, but their chief interest to many people is that here the great drama of Thomas Hardy's "Tess of the D'Urbervilles" was played out. Tess, the law dogging her steps, and Angel Clare were on their last, passionate journey, and they entered the dark loneliness of Salisbury Plain.

"What monstrous place is this?" said Angel. "It hums," said she. "Hearken!"

If Stonehenge, a national relic, and now a literary monument, was in doubt, the one man to consult about it was Thomas Hardy, down there in Wessex, which he had rescued from history and made a new human kingdom for the world. So to Dorchester went I, with an introducing and befriending word from someone who knew the great novelist, always very timorous of appearing in public, except through his books.

With Stonehenge in danger it was different, as he said when I found him at his home, Max Gate, set on a brow of ground, lifting from Wessex. He might, he smilingly agreed, fairly be called upon to speak about Stonehenge at such a moment, and with that he led me across his pleasantly natural garden to a summer-house where we could talk.

"Here," he said in his low, slow, even voice, looking at me with his quiet, steady in-taking eyes, "we have both shade and the open air, two grateful

things." For the sun was hot that August day and Wessex was drowsy under it, but Hardy was alert and alive on the question of Stonehenge.

He was then fond of bicycling, was in its rig-out, and this may have suggested his remark, "Oh, Stonehenge is only a bicycle ride from here." He glanced at me with a "musing eye," his own expression about himself, as if he half expected me to ask for the loan of his bicycle and go there. No such energy had I, but years later, on the verge of eighty, he had enough to bicycle up a hill, and was surprised that the effort tried him.

On my journey from London I had dipped into "Tess" again, and I mentally contrasted its warm colourfulness with the author's grey coolness. He was in good health, in as evident spirits as he ever had, for he was never gay or demonstrative, and he was at the high-top of his genius, "The Dynasts" period, when he was practising his precept, "Poetry is emotion put into measure. The emotion must come by nature, but the measure can be acquired by art."

He might, however, in appearance, have been a matter-of-fact Wessex yeoman, or, perhaps a better description, a "bonnet laird," as they say in Scotland. Certainly in bearing, manner, temperament and dress he was a reflected man of the soil to which

he inherently belonged. His foot was not only on his "native heath," but he was the personification of the Wessex he has bequeathed to us, with his own heart, so attached to it in life, resting for ever in its mother earth.

"It is Stonehenge," Clare had whispered to Tess, and, exclaimed she, "The heathen temple, you mean," and he said, "Yes. Older than the centuries ; older than the D'Urbervilles. Well, what shall we do, darling ?"

We know what they did, and I recalled the torture of the scene as I sat in Hardy's summer-house hesitating to break what seemed a spell of the novel and of him. "Sleepy, are you, dear ?" Clare had asked Tess. "I think you are lying on an altar." "I like very much to be here," she murmured to him. "It is so solemn and lonely—after my great happiness—with nothing but the sky above my face."

A little later, "And they sacrifice to God here ?" asked she, and he answered "No." "Who to ?" "I believe the sun. That lofty stone set away by itself in the direction of the sun, which will presently rise behind it." So they talked in whispers, Tess and Clare, and—

"Presently the night wind died out and the quivering little pools in the cup-like hollows of the stones lay still. At the same time something seemed

to move on the verge of the dip eastward—a mere dot. - It was the head of a man approaching them from the hollow beyond the Sun-Stone.”

There were sixteen of them on the Plain, men who “walked as if trained,” and the whole country was raised, but pleaded Clare, “Let her finish her sleep.” Then by and by, “What is it, Angel?” she said, starting up. “Have they come for me?” “Yes, dearest,” he said, “they have come.” “It is as it should be,” she murmured. “Angel, I am almost glad—yes, glad. This happiness could not have lasted. It was too much. I have had enough, and now I shall not live for you to despise me.”

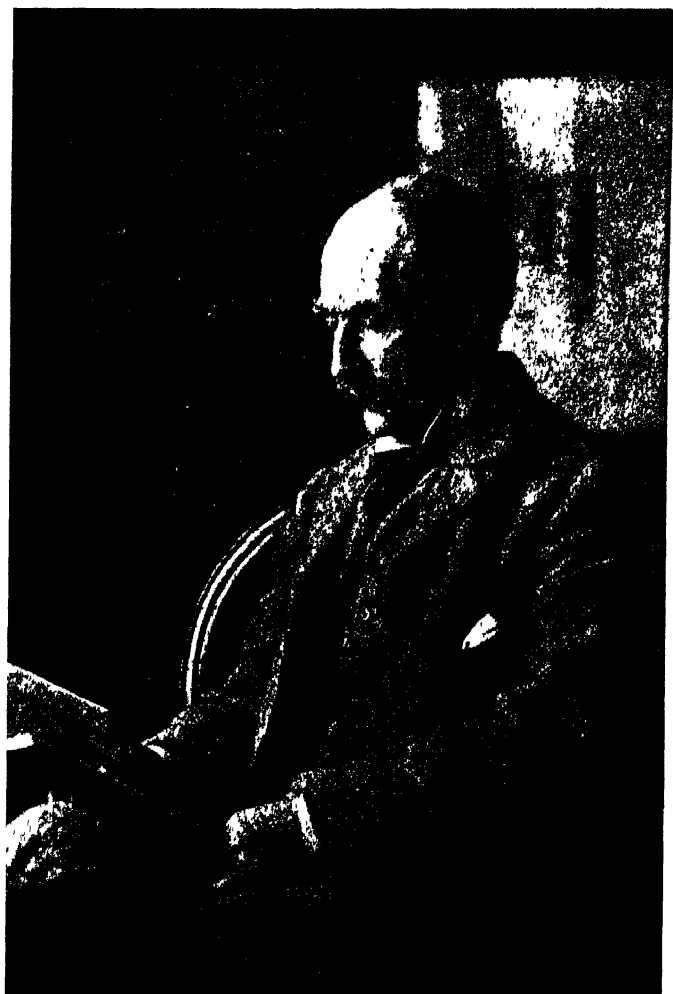
Stonehenge in the market—after that! Thomas Hardy could not realise the possibility of its being carted out of the country by a rich American or anybody else. Nor was it, but there was much talk of the possibility and danger, and that led Hardy to a general observation about our national monuments. They always interested him, partly, perhaps, as a result of his training in architecture, more because his genius saw in them tokens of the rise and progress of mankind, especially Stonehenge in his own Wessex.

“A nation like our own,” he said gravely, bending towards me, one knicker-bockered leg thrown over the other—an attitude of his—“should have a

final guardianship of any monument which is of value to it as a page of history, even though the hieroglyphics of such monument or relic cannot be deciphered as yet. I don't know how this is to be brought about, but that the thing is right there should not be two opinions. We assume, in fact, that the owner of a property on which there happens to be a national relic is, in the larger sense, the custodian, for the nation, of that relic. It is possible to conceive circumstances in which this might be a hardship, only there it is."

Here was almost the one-time architect and born archæologist speaking in the careful, estimated manner of such men, and indeed Hardy's novels often have that note. He was also practical when he told me to suppose, for argument's sake, that the stones of Stonehenge were carried to America, or somewhere else, far from Wessex. What would happen?

They would lose all interest, because they would not be Stonehenge, and it would be the same with Stonehenge which was left. The relics being gone, the associations of the place would be broken, and all the sentiment would evaporate. It would, in a characteristic Hardy simile, be as if King Solomon had actually cut the child in two, leaving no child at all.



*By Hermann Lea.*

*Thomas Hardy at Home in Wessex*





With more animation, he added that if Stonehenge then, or later, did really come into the market, it should be bought for and by the nation. "Nay," said he, "I should welcome the opportunity because I have never liked the idea of its being private property." But there was no need to buy all the land about it, only a certain area ; say two thousand acres, as securing control of the frame of the monument as well as itself. It derived much from its site, the freedom and feeling of Salisbury Plain, and that element must be safeguarded. It would never do for anybody to get a plot of ground near-by and, given the humour, erect a building there.

Sensible advice to the nation about a national treasure, spoken most modestly by the one Englishman who has given ancient Stonehenge an added modern interest. But he never thought of that as he next discussed the condition of the ruins and the best means of preserving them. Yet the tone of his voice told how intimate Stonehenge was in his own life, how it had been an inheritance of his Wessex blood, almost an altar of his russet-coated forbears. He had always known it not merely as a Wessex cairn, laden with secrets of pre-historic times, but as a fallen house which mankind had anciently imprinted with the marks of hands and feet. Also he had made particular visits to it

for lights and shades of the atmosphere which Tess and Clare found there.

That is how we get in "Tess" the passage, "The band of silver paleness along the east horizon made even the distant parts of the Great Plain appear dark and near; and the whole enormous landscape bore that impress of reserve, taciturnity and hesitation which is usual just before dawn. The eastern pillars and their architraves stood up black against the light and the great flame-shaped Sun-Stone beyond them and the Stone of Sacrifice midway."

Or the other passage, following Clare's exclamation, "It hums," and Tess's "Hearken": "The wind, playing upon the edifice, produced a booming tune, like the note of some gigantic, one-stringed harp. No other sound came from it, and lifting his hand and advancing a step or two, Clare felt the vertical surface of the wall. It seemed to be of solid stone, without joint or moulding." A "colossal rectangular pillar," then another, and, "At an indefinite height overhead something made the black sky blacker, which had the semblance of a vast architrave uniting the pillars horizontally."

"Tess," the story, had a new meaning in the presence of Thomas Hardy, but now he was only speaking as one who wished to keep its "Temple of

the Winds ” as complete as possible. “ What,” he said, “ strikes a visitor accustomed to observe the effect of years and weather on ruins so exposed as those, is that the dilapidation in progress is not so insignificant as may be cursorily imagined. Wet weather and frost are, as all know, the destructive factors in the case, and to the best of my recollection it is on the south-west face of the ruin that this decay goes on most rapidly.” There time nibbled year after year, and it was only owing to the shelter afforded by the south-west walls to the rest of the structure, that any of the columns were erect ; all these being the ones to the north-west.

Hardy recalled, as an occasional personal experience, how the rain can come down on Salisbury Plain ; in heavy, closely marshalled order, with drops that seemed to pass into one’s body. It was a wonder, remembering the downpour of long centuries—and he shrugged his shoulders in realistic action of the thought—that Stonehenge had stood so well.

“ Moreover,” he emphasised, stretching out his right hand, a rare gesture, “ apart from the effect of the water on the stones themselves, they are being gradually undermined by the trickling down of the rain they intercept, forming pools on the ground, so that the foundation sinks on the wettest side till the

stone topples over.” Only three architraves remained on their proper pillars, and as these declined the architraves would slip off. The one way of protecting the ruin from driving rains, which must ultimately abraid and overthrow them, was by a belt of plantations.

“But the landscape,” said I. “Yes,” answered Hardy, thinking, and then he examined this point in deliberate, constructive words meant to show how sentiment and practicability might be united.

Against tree planting, it could be urged that most people consider the gaunt nakedness of its situation to be a great part of the solemnity and fascination of Stonehenge. It was by no means certain, however, that the country immediately round it was originally bare and open on all sides. If it were enclosed by a wood approaching no nearer than ten chains to the bank of earth around the stone circle, the force of the disastrous winds and rains would be broken by the trees, and the duration of the ruin lengthened far beyond its possible duration otherwise. The objection to a plantation would be the less in that it would shut out the incongruities of cultivation and agricultural buildings, which had advanced across Salisbury Plain, so interfering with the eerie loneliness of Stonehenge.

Thus Hardy prescribed for it, and then I sug-

gested that, through his intimacy with it, he probably had a whole treasury of Stonehenge lights and shades. Had all these been woven into the story of "Tess," or did anything remain unsaid? It was a question, and Hardy gave it an answer which, coming from him, will always have a guiding value and a knowledgable interest for pilgrims to Stonehenge.

"The size of the whole structure," he said, "is considerably destroyed to the eye by the openness of the place, as with all such erections, and a strong light detracts from its impressiveness. In the brilliant noonday sunlight, in which most visitors repair thither, and surrounded by bicycles and sandwich papers, the scene is not, to my mind, attractive, but garish and depressing. In dull, threatening weather, however, and in the dusk of the evening, its charm is indescribable. On a day of heavy cloud, the sky seems almost to form a natural roof touching the pillars, and colours are revealed on the surfaces of the stones whose presence would not be suspected on a fine day. And if a gale of wind is blowing, the strange musical hum emitted by Stonehenge can never be forgotten. To say that on moonlight nights it is at its finest is a commonplace."

Perhaps he was remembering Sir Walter Scott's tribute to a Scottish historical ruin: "If thou

would'st view fair Melrose aright, Go visit it by the pale moon-light." He did not say, but passed for a moment to the possible origins of Stonehenge.

"All one could risk," said he, for himself, "is that the building was probably erected after the barrow period of interment in these islands, from the fact that one or two barrows seem to have interfered with its construction." The problem of its purpose and building could only be narrowed down, or settled, by careful excavations, but he added, with a true touch of Hardy, the novelist, "I confess to a liking for the state of dim conjecture in which we stand with regard to its history."

That is a self-contained story of Thomas Hardy and the Stonehenge of "Tess," brought quietly yet dramatically into contact and contrast ; but it was only an introduction to later intercourse with him, another enviable story. There is, however, a link between them in an experience I had one Sunday forenoon, at Aldeburgh, the old-world, 'longshore, unspoilt town on the Suffolk Sea where Edward Clodd had his gracious and kindly home.

Many celebrated friends were his guests, down and across the years, at Strafford House, overlooking the deep, grey, salt waters into which, by his desire, his ashes were cast, after his loveable soul had taken flight. Thomas Hardy came there, glad to come ;

“SWEETNESS AND LIGHT”

so did George Meredith, and neither of them could have written anything more true of their host than two lines of John Masfield's :

*“ Gentle he is, and quiet, and most wise*

*And where he walks there flutter little birds.”*



*A picture of Strafford House, Edward Clodd's Aldeburgh home of “sweetness and light,” where many eminent Victorians and Edwardians shared his delightful hospitality.*

That Sunday Edward Clodd and some of his guests went walking, but Thomas Hardy wanted another look, for I fancy he had visited it before, at the fine old Aldeburgh Church, of which the poet Crabbe was once the vicar. Amiably he took me with him, and we walked round the church, within



which service was going on, and he looked at its walls and windows with the appreciative eye of an architect. He stood silently, for some minutes, beneath one open window, listening to the singing, and with that simple, spontaneous testimony to the natural reverence and spiritual melody in him, I now associate a remark he made to a well-known English man of letters.

"I should," he said, "go to Church every Sunday morning if it were not that people would misinterpret my motives." His heart urged him one way, his reason compelled him another; but, beside that church window at Aldeburgh he was a simple, sincere study of the religion that is within us.

Presently he turned away, and we wandered among the gravestones in the churchyard, and he closely examined some of the older ones for the names on them. He had in this resurrectionist way, I learned, found names for characters in his novels, and there were others he had noted and not used, because, as a novelist, he was always full of material of all kinds. A particular stone, much stricken by the weather, had fallen to one side, leaving, at the foot, only two letters of a word exposed—"Su." Hardy's eye fell on them, and then he fell on his knee and gently scooped away the hiding grass and earth, a task in which I helped him.

“ Ah,” he exclaimed, when we had made the necessary clearance, “ Su for Susan,” and he added that he had never seen this contraction before. It was, apparently, the pet-name of a little girl, and he wondered if it had been general in Old Suffolk or in a country very dear to him, Old Wessex.

## XIX. OLD FAMILIAR FACES

*The gentle art of after-dinner and public speaking ; taking us to " T.P.," Mr. Augustine Birrell, Mr. Bernard Shaw, Mr. G. K. Chesterton, Sir James Barrie, Chauncey Depew, " Bob " Ingersoll and President Wilson.*

THERE is speaking and there is after-dinner speaking, and if you have been a habitant of Fleet Street for some time you become knowing about both. They differ as much from each other as a steam-roller and a delicate instrument like the violin, but that generalisation is subject to many qualifications.

Nobody belonging to Fleet Street has been nearer a natural mastership of the two gifts than Mr. T. P. O'Connor, whom his countless friends will always remember as " T.P." Some of them, thinking to be Irish, and therefore, perhaps, to please him, said " Tay Pay," but he did not like that address.

My acquaintance with him goes back to a time when frock coats and tall hats were the fashion, not the exception, and it was a costume which became

his well-rounded yet squarely set figure. He was always effective on the public platform, because he had that indefinable natural gift which first interests an audience and then holds it. It was pleasant to see him rise, bow his acknowledgment of a hopeful welcome, after, may be, a series of stodgy speakers, and hear his clear, soft voice. He could be humorous or tragic, insistent or appealing, anecdotal or reminiscent, but always human, and therefore he “got over.”

Not to know “T.P.” was not to know Fleet Street, for he was one of its characteristic children. He had, when I last saw him, grown old and slow of physical movement, though mentally he remained splendidly active. He was in bed at his Westminster flat, and as it was early forenoon, he had just finished reading the morning papers. They lay all over his bed, making a newsprint quilt very appropriate for so distinguished a journalist, and some, curling their pages this way or that, had fallen on the floor and so lay, carpeting it.

“T.P.” was a confirmed snuffer, and while he talked he would, every now and then, open a little box which was on a table beside him and take a pinch. Sometimes he did not take all the pinch, and what he missed would fall on the bedclothes, so much brown powder. “Oh,” his kindly, motherly

housekeeper would say, "I constantly put new sheets on Mr. O'Connor's bed and as constantly they become grubby" ; a confidence to which he would listen with his genial and humorous smile and then take another pinch of snuff.

Were you a snuffer ? No ! Well, you missed something perhaps. It was an old-fashioned vice for an old-fashioned man, but not so bad as cocktails. Perhaps, a cigarette ! Not then ! He thought that nowadays everybody smoked cigarettes, anywhere, even in their bedrooms, all the time. He had kept his Irish brogue for all his half-century of life in London Town, and it was musical and blarneyish.

It was for me, however, to persuade him to come and make a speech at an Omar Khayyám Club dinner. He had, by his doctor's orders, almost stopped going to dinners, and, said he, to deliver a speech meant you did not enjoy the dinner, for you were awaiting your "call," like any other well-graced actor. Not quite stage-fright, but a nervous tenseness, as of having to do something which you wanted to do well and might not. Still, the after-dinner speaker who did not feel like that was not likely to "come over" as well as the one who did ; sympathy, temperament, atmosphere, whatever the reason might be.

“T.P.” would see about it, for he was courtesy unto kindness, and he would write his decision, which, when it came, was that he didn’t feel equal to the invitation. But I had heard him speak often before, at social gatherings, and knew how near he could reach to the ideal after-dinner speech, if there be such a thing.

Perhaps he would, a quizzical smile in his eye, open with the calculated abruptness, “Now, having eaten your dinner, or tried to eat it, I suppose I must pay for it.” Or he would begin with something anecdotal as, “I once knew an Englishman who was a lad ; no, a lad-o, as we used to say in Ireland, meaning a devil of a fellow.” Either way he mentally leapt the dining-table, and his hearers found the rest delightful, for “T.P.” was a born speaker, public or after-dinner, and he had perfected his gift.

If you had asked him, however, he would probably have named his friend, Mr. Augustine Birrell, as the best after-dinner speaker of our time. He has never been a regular Fleet Street man, though he may have written his well-known “Obiter Dicta” essays in the Temple near-by when he was pursuing law. On the other hand, he has never been a stranger to Fleet Street, with its Whitefriars Club, named after the old monks of the

region, or its meetings of the newer Elian Club, founded in tribute to Charles Lamb.

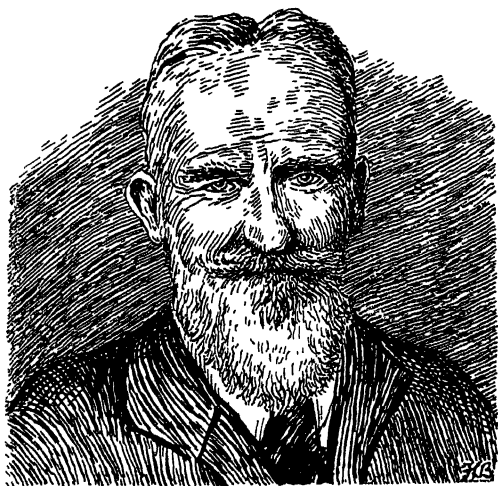
Possibly it was to its hospitable board he came one evening with a most amusing account of how he had been interviewed on his eightieth birthday. He was in bed when the interviewer burst in on him, and he hardly knew how the fellow managed it. Possibly a servant, prouder of the master's age than he was himself, had, out of that kitchen sort of vanity, just shown him up. At least there he was, and how could anybody, undressed and eighty years old, get up and kick him out ?

So he had to say something, silence being impossible, and his friends who read the interview in print afterwards, told him it was interesting and, what was doubtful, characteristic. Personally, he found difficulty in recognising what he had said from the blankets, and certainly there had been words which were not printable, but, on the whole, nobody came by serious harm. Some people might even have liked to be hunted down in this way, seeing in it tribute to their significance, but not he, especially in bed and starting eighty.

Before Mr. George Bernard Shaw moved from Adelphi Terrace to Whitehall you could see him now and then walking through Fleet Street. Here was a tall, loose, long-legged figure, wearing heavy

## WRITER AND PROPHET

boots, a loose, rough overcoat, or a grey waterproof, anyhow a soft felt hat and an air of detachment. May be he was thinking of the far days when he



*A new glimpse of Mr. Bernard Shaw, more or less as you may see him, talking, working or merely smiling ; for, like all men of original genius, he has many personalities in one.*

bombarded and invaded Fleet Street from his first democratic London fastness in Fitzroy Square, beyond the confines of Bloomsbury. He did not, as one of his early friends has said, wait until he was great, to behave like a great man.

If the manuscripts by him, which editors then left with the printer, or worse, put in the waste-



paper basket, could be retrieved, what would they not be worth to-day, when American millionaires, with or without literary tastes, are all "collecting Shaw"? Enough to buy a castle in Ireland, in Spain, or anywhere else; aye, and furnish it in Shavian style, whatever that might mean.

Editors can, or think they can, "spot" genius in a writer, but for all that optimists say, it fails to make good with the public as often as it succeeds. It is there, but it is not discovered or recognised by the world at large, on which anything unusual has really to be imposed. Even editors, the wise elder brethren of Fleet Street, cannot know when genius will succeed or they would have treasured Mr. George Bernard Shaw's early "copy" as tenderly as they would guard Bank of England notes.

There were more careful people about when Mr. G. K. Chesterton came to the neighbourhood of Fleet Street, where, up from the wilds of Beaconsfield, you may still occasionally encounter him. He had a way of sketching funny pictures on blotting-pads, just to divert his leisure hours as a publisher's reader, and some of these masterpieces are understood to exist. They may not suggest that "G.K.C." would have been a greater man as an artist than as a writer, a Charles Keen, a Phil May or a "Joe" Pennell, but we should all like to see them.

## A MODERN JOHNSON

What a triumphant picture somebody else might have drawn of him on a certain winter night before the Great War, a heavy milestone by which we



*A picture, from a recent sketch by Mr. S. J. Woolf, an American artist, of Mr. G. K. Chesterton, whose Johnsonian air is familiar in Fleet Street.*

have learned to date things. It was the Ludgate end of Fleet Street and a portly figure, clad in an Inverness cape and wearing a black, wide-brimmed, soft felt hat, was reading a book under the light of a street lamp. No doubt it was a "find" of the afternoon being examined with eagerness by Mr. Chester-

ton, for the figure silhouetted against the darkness was his and could only be his.

We have had nobody else in our Fleet Street so near in circumference and deliverance to Samuel Johnson, and a James Boswell may yet come along as a page of letters to "G.K.C." His tinkling laugh always ripples out to a good speech by anybody else, and one by himself affords a double pleasure to a hearer in that he frankly seems to enjoy making it. The man who laughs at his own jokes is in danger of being a nuisance, but the man who, like Mr. Chesterton, laughs with them, is twice a benefactor.

Sir James Barrie, on the contrary, does not appear to enjoy either delivering himself or hearing himself. He rises slowly, hesitantly, as if he does not know what he is going to say, why he is going to say it, or, indeed, why he is there at all. He is not long in reaching his full height, for he is short, though, in recent years, he has been making up for that by greater "girth," as they would say at Kirreimuir, from which Barrie first came to Fleet Street somewhat before the Eighteen-Nineties.

He may tell you something about that, leaning against a mantelpiece or anything else near that will support him in his ordeal of speech-making. Also he is armed with "My Lady Nicotine," as a pipe

or a cigar, but if she be essential to thought and memory, she is apt to disturb their delivery. He speaks in a voice which has an irregular cadence in it, a rise and fall of the still fondly loyal Scots accent, with its rolling "r," and a constant surprise in charm of phrase and puckishness of narrative. There is also a rhythmic movement of the body, the head and the hands especially, which might suggest a Barrie play being rehearsed by the author for the guidance of the actors, and possibly the manner may have come that way, as well as from inherent nervousness, otherwise temperament.

A dreamer and a prophet talking to Fleet Street, and of Fleet Street, and what does he say as he wanders on, so easy, so confidential, at moments so "over the hills and far away"? He goes back to Fleet Street as he found it when he came there and began, without licence of influence, shooting his articles at editors. Of course, he was not a literary firm with much capital, and therefore he had to be frugal while he watched the fate of his stuff.

When the postman was about due he would steal out from his lodgings to get an early glimpse of what he might be bringing. If he had a large, squarish or longish letter, it was an article returned, and there could only be one Bath bun and one lump of sugar for tea. But if it was a small letter, then it

contained a "proof," which meant acceptance of the article and a guinea or two earned, and two Bath buns and two lumps of sugar were possible.

It was, you will gather, the whimsical wizard from the North, being whimsical about himself and Fleet Street, to which he remains most neighbourly, since he lives in an outmost turret of Adelphi Terrace. "Joe" Pennell once lived there, high above the Thames Embankment, and many of his drawings testify to the fine view which Sir James Barrie has of London. Adelphi Terrace being a community by itself, a land uplifted by the famous Scottish Adam brothers, Sir James would naturally have known "Joe" and his brusque yet loveable personality.

The shades of the Adelphi have also known another draughtsman, Thomas Hardy, when he was a young architect, and worked in Blomfield's office there, as a tablet in one of the terraced houses will tell you, if you happen on it. The creator of "Peter Pan" could guide you to it because he put it up, just as he led in the movement which bore Thomas Hardy's ashes to a place in Westminster Abbey.

There was a tale that Sir James Barrie and Mr. Bernard Shaw used to shout jokes and stories at each other from their respective windows, but that

was only someone else's little joke, perhaps "Joe" Pennell's. Being such near neighbours they could, however, dine and sup on each other's good talk when they liked, glad, no doubt, to escape the

My method is to buy some ink and paper and write what I have to say with my old fountain pen. I write in shorthand, which my secretary transcribes with a typewriter. I work between breakfast and lunch, when I am fresh and sober, like St Peter (Acts II. 15) G.B.S.  
12/5/31.

*Mr. Bernard Shaw tells how he writes his books, and makes a Biblical reference which the curious will instantly look up.*

fierce light that beats upon fame. They have taken it with a difference which suggests that fame has many ways: Mr. Bernard Shaw challengingly, as from his house-top, Sir James shyly, as if he would like to run away and couldn't. One personality is as a rushing, mighty wind, the other as a gentle zephyr, and public interest is caught and held by both, because both have salt as well as sincerity.

These qualities are essential in all good speaking, platform or after-dinner, and so avowed two famous American authorities, Chauncey Depew and Colonel "Bob" Ingersoll, whom I had the chance of meeting during a visit to America. Depew was long the "crack" after-dinner speaker in a country which has prided itself on making this an art, while Ingersoll, famous as an agnostic, an ugly word that has almost disappeared, was equally famous in the arena of oratory. Each had, in his delivery, the grand manner of an older day, alike when addressing a small, chosen company or a great, public audience, as each had a courtesy so marked that it was instantly almost friendship.

Picture Depew, with the face of a lawyer, the twinkling eye of a humorist, the massive brow of a thinker, the mental tidiness of a man of action, and listen to his pleasant, modulated American voice. After-dinner speaking, in order to be successful, should have enough sense and solidity to hold the judgment, and enough fun to relieve the agony. If a speech was too serious it was inevitably a failure, and if too whimsical it was equally a failure. Combine the two things happily and you were a success, in America certainly, always if the speech caught the immediate atmosphere and surroundings and reflected them as in a mirror.

Any after-dinner deliverance which relied only on stories, Depew felt, was bound to be a disappointment and disaster. One story would go if it came in naturally, and, as it were, hit the company from below the table, hardly more than one, unless the others were particularly good. Sometimes, when he had taken Englishmen to dinners in New York, they said, "Your speakers chaff too much." Possibly that view-point was explained by the fact that English dinners were mostly held for serious ends, while American dinners were always, more or less, for simple enjoyment. This, and the American instinct for saying things out, gave an after-dinner speaker more rope and more entertaining results, but he must be careful never to hang himself.

Pleasantry, or chaff, or ridicule or sarcasm meant point and sparkle in an after-dinner deliverance, but it had all to be easy and "on the spot," so to say. Was the after-dinner speaker born like a poet, or was he made by practice? Both. The gift had to be there, but it also had to be developed by study and practice, and, added Depew, "I know a man who has tried, hours and hours a day, for twenty-five years, and he can't speak yet and never will."

Next Colonel "Bob" Ingersoll! A tall, well-



knit, rather stout figure, a fine face with a vivid gleam in the eyes and a sounding but agreeable voice. He had a cigar, now in his lips, now in his hand, and the smoke floated above him in little curls and billows. Strength of mind and picturesqueness of body joined in him, and they also united in his deliberate, chosen utterance of the English language, "our common, rich inheritance," as he remarked.

Oratory was the same the world over, and so there was no difference between the real English orator and the real American orator. "The man who thinks on his feet, who has the pose of passion, the face that thought illumines, a voice in harmony with the ideals expressed, who has logic like a column and poetry like a vine, who transfigures the common, dresses the ideals of the people in purple and fine linen, who has the art of finding the best and noblest in his hearers and who, in a thousand ways, creates the atmosphere in which the bud grows and flourishes and bursts into blossom—that man is an orator, no matter of what time or what country." It was really a picture, this, of Ingersoll himself, and through it one could see him on the platform ; attitude, gesture, voice, emphasis, all springing from an inner tide of thought and feeling.

He was wary, being lawyer-trained and shy of comparisons, when asked about English and

American speakers in relation to each other. Moreover, he had never heard any of the great English orators and his judgment had therefore to rest on reading. "I think," he declared, however, "that undoubtedly the finest passage ever uttered in Great Britain was by Curran in his defence of Rowan." Alas ! he did not quote it, and, at the moment, I omitted to ask him to identify it, and there was no after opportunity. Gladstone, he went on, seemed to lack logic, while John Bright, though a great speaker, appeared to miss imagination and the creative faculty. Disraeli spoke for the clubs and the House of Commons, and his speeches were too artificial to be read, there resembling his novels of English political life.

"We have," Ingersoll added, taking ground more familiar and surer to him, "had several fine speakers in America. I think Thomas Corwin stands at the top of the natural orators. Sergeant Prentiss, the lawyer, was a very great talker. Henry Ward Beecher was the greatest orator the pulpit has produced. Theodore Parker was a superb speaker. Probably, however, Daniel Webster occupies the highest place among American speakers."

Additions have come to that American order of eloquence since "Bob" Ingersoll suggested it,

and certainly he is numbered with its members. But when such a prophecy was hinted, he only smiled and remarked, "Well, I have said things because I thought they ought to be said, so much personal and definite action for mental and spiritual liberty in the world."

He would, as a student of the spoken and written word, have been greatly interested in the deliverances of President Wilson, about the time America was coming into the Great War. Wilson's command of severe yet eloquent English made him then the spokesman of Armageddon, not only for America but for all the English-speaking peoples, and indeed all the democratic allies.

English folk read his words, illumined by high ideals and contagious character, as they were wont to attend on the words of Gladstone, and saluted this American Elijah, rising above the clouds of war. "Here," they said to each other, "are messages which may live, in spirit and in letter, like Abraham Lincoln's speech at Gettysburg." It was, perhaps, President Wilson's greatest hour, and it was also a phase in the psychology of the Anglo-Saxon race, as it is influenced by the written or spoken word.

Naturally, the English, meaning only the English, are a reticent, slow-thinking, long-thinking people,

and the quicker, more imaginative Scots, Irish and Welsh, being a minority, are rather lost in this national type. It follows the reticence and slow, long-thinkingness of the Englishman, that he wants a trumpet-spokesman in a great crisis. Two qualities he demands in that spokesman: character, honest and bold, and a gift of expression in noble English. He wants not alone light and leading, but wants them in language that goes like a sword-flash, nothing flowery, nothing braided with mere rhetoric, but the grandeur of simplicity, the eloquence of severity.

Now, England had at the fateful hour when America was casting herself into the scales of Armageddon no public man to whom she could look, like Pitt or Burke, or Gladstone. Asquith had the character, and he might have had the right masterfulness of English to speak forth that character, if the law had not given him a round, elaborate style, holding the thunder but not always the lightning. John Morley, who had the publicist's literary gift in full flower, was an old man, and he had been silent except for the writing of his recollections.

Arthur Balfour had a European name as a statesman and philosopher, but it sprang from sheer intellect combined with personal charm, not from

that warmth of vision which a nation's spokesman at high moments must possess. Mr. Lloyd George can speak to the "man in the street" better than any politician in the world, and he has fine, natural gleams of prose poetry. But he lacks the weight of character, the mellowed wisdom and the literary touch of phrasing which belong to the truly great.

Thus the English people, following their tradition, did not find it in any one individual, until President Wilson drove through the fog of war with a clarion voice which will be remembered on both sides of the Atlantic when, may be, much else in his dramatic life-story is forgotten.

## XX. EDITORS AS HUMAN BEINGS

*Old masters, like Delane of "The Times" and Russel of the "Scotsman"; foreword to intimate portraits of newer masters, Alfred Fletcher, Henry Massingham or Robertson Nicoll; all showing editorship a very "human document."*

“A KNIGHT there was,” wrote our knightly English Chaucer, “and that a perfect man, that from the time he first began to ride out he loved chivalry, truth, and honour, freedom and courtesy.”

It might be a description of the perfect editor, as our young ideas beheld him, somewhere among the clouds, on a Mount Olympus of his own. Nobody could live up to such editorial knighthood, any more than a king could live up to the saying that he can do no wrong. But it is not a bad thing to contemplate both these perfections, as having a certain mystery and majesty. When gods, whatever they be, descend into the street, they are likely to have their lustre dimmed.

Even so, great editors of great papers have

always managed, while sometimes veiling their faces, to keep in touch with the human market outside. John Delane, quick alike for news and views, got wind, at a dinner-party, of one of the most historic "scoops" "The Times" has had. Alexander Russel of the "Scotsman" was, while he lived, as familiar in Scottish conversation as Walter Scott and as good a fisher of the Tweed. They were editors who observed the anonymous sanctity of the old-fashioned editorial godhead, but their thunders shook the earth and their lightnings illuminated it.

Editorship, like all human things, has been an evolution, and to the most recent phases of this, one's own observation in Fleet Street has been witness. There was a day when everything was done in the name of the editor, although his real activities might not go beyond the editorial page. Now he is rather the head and front of a hierarchy in which many heads and hands exercise some kind of executive authority. Its pope, at one end, is the proprietor, or board of directors; its acolyte, at the other end, the youngest printer's devil, "pulling proofs" instead of swinging incense. Daily papers have become more newspapers than organs in which editors proclaim the time of day, and that is in consonance with the modern trend for first-rate

organisation and high efficiency, in place of direct, individual editorial prestige.

We have had a pageant of evolution, and it seems clearest in memory when one views it through the personalities of notable editors, known familiarly or heard about. There was once no slogan in Fleet Street more sounding than "Mudford of the 'Standard.'" He edited on such secluded heights that he was hard to approach, and so little known humanly, but he was a power in affairs, partly, perhaps, because of this Lama-like seclusion. Or there was "Robinson of the 'Daily News,'" also powerful, but easier of access and most friendly at the Reform Club, where, nearly every day, he lunched with James Payne, the novelist, and other cronies, and played chess for an hour afterwards.

John Morley was a memory at the "Pall Mall," and Frederick Greenwood a memory of the "St. James's," and both were still active in or about politics. "Le Sage of the 'Telegraph'" was man-at-the-wheel for the Lawsons, themselves first-rate journalists, with Sir Edwin Arnold and other "lions of Peterborough Court" to help him. Thus went Fleet Street in those yester-years of many individual names: "Buckle of 'The Times'" over at Printing House Square, "T.P." cutting in from Stonecutter Street, or elsewhere, and W. T.



Stead firing up his monthly review down near the Thames Embankment.

It was probably at a Whitefriars dinner in Fleet Street that "T.P." and "W.T." both happened to be present one evening. But nobody ever said "W.T."; just "Stead," as you might say Mussolini, and that suggests a striking contrast between the two. "T.P.," editorially as well as personally, was casual and easy, smiling on the world, getting a good deal out of it, enjoying it. Stead was grave and serious, charged with missions which he expressed in daring journalism like "The Maiden Tribute," and his fight for a better navy, events of his "Pall Mall Gazette" editorship. You could fancy "T.P.," with his brogue and his blarney, almost liking to tilt at a windmill. Stead would have battered it down as if it were another French Bastille, sure to shelter injustice and suffering.

One was as keen, and in the end, may be, as purposeful an editor as the other, but they differed in their ways and appearance as much as a Cavalier and a Roundhead. Possibly it was simply that "T.P." had a sense of humour, and let it rip, and that "W.T.," for all his wealth of personality, had no sense of humour, or at least took care to hide it. Not even editors can make the best of two worlds,

though it has been a charge against some of them that they have tried.

When Fleet Street has a Journalists' Corner in St. Bride's, or, even better, in St. Paul's, as Westminster Abbey has its Poets' Corner, Stead and O'Connor will both be recorded there. They were valiant and true men of the pen and, more, they will probably rank as the creators of two very popular branches of English daily journalism: personal gossip which tells us all about everybody, and the interview which sometimes tells us all about nobody.

Nothing ever springs from nothing, though there are people who try that on us, and there is abiding truth in the record that Topsy of "Uncle Tom's Cabin" just "grow'd." Always, if you like, there has been the personal and particular paragraph, and for very long, in America anyhow, the interview. But Stead turned it to high ends, and, doing that, was able to plant it into the then conservative garden of English journalism, where it has since flourished. Similarly "T.P." and his pioneer young men of the "Star" made the text of "mainly about people" a human mirror of the passing show, a great uplift from chitter-chatter, though heaven knows, there is enough of it about.

Publicist and missionary was Stead in the world of affairs, but he also had the real sense of news, and he

could dramatise it. There was thus almost a fitness in his death when the "Titanic" went down, and had there been, on the Atlantic, the swift chain of wireless there is to-day, he would, no doubt, have sent a fine account of the disaster to Fleet Street ; and lived to read it.

As it was, his obituarists could have included nobody with a more sympathetic and experienced gift than his friend "T.P." He wrote, while he and they lived, obituaries of many of his contemporaries for the "D.T.," on which he had his first job when he joined the Street of Adventure. Some have, perhaps, still to appear, and to them all he gave that friendly, intimate, revealing touch which was his art in an "obituary." As to himself, his writing-table had a little oak panel with the words :

*" I refuse to be buried  
Until I am dead."*

Alas ! it is easy for an editor to be buried while he is still alive, though "T.P." was not. He has only to leave his chair, or what is more likely, have it fall from him, and unless he is a personality, apart from it, the noise of the world is apt to drown him. No divorce could be more sad, more complete, but



*The New Fleet Street, in whose modern architecture, soaring and massive, we may hope to read the real spirit of the New Journalism as light in the heavens and a continuing city on earth.*

then mutability is the pendant of every "crowded hour of glorious life," if editorship can ever be that.

It is something to have lived and worked in the sunshine and shadow of men who gave it not only brains and hearts but that uncounting sacrifice without which either is imperfect. My thoughts there are with my first London editor, Alfred Ewen Fletcher, of the old, splendid "Daily Chronicle," and with Henry W. Massingham, who succeeded him, after being Parliamentary sketch writer for the paper, and its Literary Editor, offices in which his rarely varied gifts had opportunity and freedom.

We talk privately to each other, friend to friend, about friends, of those who are still with us in Fleet Street, but to the dead we pay tribute because they are above praise or hurt ; and neither hurt nor praise could have spoiled Fletcher. He would turn half round in his big elbow-chair, take off and rub his spectacles, square them again upon his nose, run his hand over his brow and glance tenderly into a pipe so democratic as hardly to out-swagger an Irish dudeen. He had the kindest smile you could fancy, the softest, cheeriest of voices, eyes with dreams and humour in them, and, clad in whitening hair, still pretty thick, a broad, long, handsome head.

"A.E.F.," as he usually signed his cheery notes, had been born in Lincolnshire, on the borders of the

Wash, a country which is sometimes spoken of as a swamp but which those who know it call a garden. Didn't Charles Kingsley say there was an air of boundless freedom about the East Anglian Fens? He might have added that there is an independence of character among their people, perhaps, in part, attributable to the fact that there are no great resident landlords.

Anyhow, that was Fletcher's idea, and he expressed it simply and naturally in his own personality. Possibly this was the human touch which enabled him to grasp that, even in the 'Nineties, high politics were not the whole concern of the people. Every seven years or so a fresh generation of readers, with new ideas and aspirations, came from the elementary schools. An earnest interest in current literature must follow, unless popular education had been a failure and the big stream of new books from Paternoster Row meant nothing.

There were social and industrial questions, religious movements, trade organisations, a score of subjects of the prime interest because they intimately affected the lives of everybody. Humaneness, whatever involved the well-being of the people—that was personal catechism, his editorial platform; and there, beyond question, he was a journalistic pioneer. "If," he would say in

newspaper language, "you capture the thinkers and the workers, you can leave the idle and the frivolous classes to be prayed for by their friends."

Alfred Fletcher's outlook in journalism was a natural consequence of his attitude to mankind, and thus it was also natural that he should be the father of the famous "Daily Chronicle" Literary Page, for, also beyond question, he was. It was his idea, and he started and tended it and saw it develop into a recognised organ of culture and power in our English book-land. Always new books have had some presence in daily newspapers, but Fletcher gave them pride of presence, saying, "Why should they not be brought within the knowledge of the man in the street? He wants to know, he should be given easy access to current literature, and I'll do my best to provide that London book window."

At first there was a page of reviews once a week, and a little later came the bold stroke of three columns every morning about "Books of the Day," with gathered news-gossip of others still unborn. The rest of Fleet Street, still rather clinging to tradition, was doubtful of this literary experiment, but when it passed into an accepted institution, the evident thing was to imitate it without, of course, so much as a compliment of flattery.

The achievement was all the more difficult and

all the greater because the "D.C.," being Radical in politics, was supposed to be at the other end of the book-buying classes. Actually, its definite and daily literary feature attracted many readers holding other politics, and so, as time went on, its position and reputation as a national journal rose enormously. Even Queen Victoria, when it printed a forthright leader about the Baccarat Case, had a message sent to the editor, not of criticism, but saying in so many words, "Thank you for your common sense and courage." At least that was the story, though it may have been confused with a letter in a like sense, which another London editor got from the Queen's Private Secretary. If it was true, Fletcher could well have boasted of the compliment, but he never did, nor did the writer of the bold leader, William Clarke, a brilliant fellow, now also long dead.

If the "D.C." Literary Page was founded by one man, it was mostly developed by another, Henry Massingham, whose early work in it included a masterly review of Thomas Hardy's "Tess." There is a tale of "H.W.M.," tumbling into grimy Whitefriars Street with the novel, in the old-fashioned three volumes, under his arm and his critique in his pocket. He threw the book and the manuscript on the table, hung his hat on a peg and exclaimed, "Well, if this isn't a great novel, I'm damned."



He signified the same next morning in a couple of columns, for that was the spacious age when a reviewer could not only give his verdict, but his reasons for that verdict. Both verdict and reasons were especially agreeable to Thomas Hardy at a time when narrow-minded people wanted his novelist's scalp, and that was a satisfaction to the reviewer, as a bit of good work always is to anybody. Another satisfaction would be to possess that review copy of "Tess," for, as a first edition, it would be worth much money to-day, but it probably just lay about the office until it was cleared out with the waste paper, such being the way of Fleet Street.

It was an education and an inspiration for a quite young man to work in close association with Massingham as Literary Editor and Editor. He saw books and book news, and literature generally, as a natural, essential part of life and progress, and so he interpreted them in journalism. His cultured and sensitive mind was sharpened by a swift and sure flair for that immediacy of tragedy or comedy which hits and holds the public. He had ranging, sympathetic, adaptive knowledge, and it was lit by spiritual feeling and given wings by imagination.

These are the inner qualities of a great editor, as indeed he was, and it was only his highly strung nature that sometimes made him a little over-positive

or a little ungenerous in a public quarrel. He was no hammer-and-tongs man, his nature being too fine for that rough stuff, but a most dexterous swordsman with his pen. He wrote, or dictated, with a rapidity and an ease which suggested a wealth of resources not called on, and whether he wrote or dictated he had a winning charm of style. Noting that, one salutes his personality as a whole, for the manner of a man's writing is a reflection of the man himself, mentally, spiritually and almost physically.

What was Henry Massingham like to the eye? A tall, slim figure ; the legs loosely hung, the body swaying gently down to them ; a longish, nervous face with a tawny moustache, deep blue eyes, glinting like a lake in sunshine, and yet, like it, capable, at another time, of a storm ; a broad, high brow from which the fair hair went back, as the north-country expression is, in a "cow's lick." That, plus eye-glasses or spectacles, which he constantly wore, was Massingham, and the moment he entered a room the atmosphere of it was different.

He brought that something of influence which undoubted personality communicates, whether to the comforting, stimulating or stirring up of other people. More, and more difficult, he impressed his personality on every issue of his paper, not merely in the editorial page but in the presentation

of its news. He saw the news of next morning as a reader would expect to have it presented, and if he sent you out to write a special article it was printed instantly. This was the logic of his own flair and a "Good morning" to you, for there is no better thrill a young journalist can have than finishing a "story" at midnight, and reading it in bed with his awakening cup of tea. It makes him feel that somehow he has had a hand in yesterday, and it sends him forth with zest to encounter the new day.

Zest never failed Massingham, for though he had no undue physical strength, he had that spark of vitality which achieves and endures. Picture him coming to his editorial office about five o'clock, seeing visitors and the paper planned for next day, then going home to dinner and returning about nine o'clock, by which time Fleet Street, in his time, had only begun to hum. Perhaps there was a political crisis involving the question, should Rosebery or Harcourt be leader of the Liberal Party and as a consequence Premier? Massingham was full of the latest talk and ideas about it all and dictated them into news, and he was full of editorial conviction and poured it into a leader.

Or was it a question of securing some special feature—Arctic articles by Dr. Nansen, or the full text of a proposed Anglo-American arbitration

treaty. He had that cabled from Washington, when the cable was not so freely used by Fleet Street as it is to-day, and thereby he left one of many marks on its sands of time. Another mark he left was his independence as an editor, for once he ran his paper strenuously, and over months, in frank opposition to the views of his chief proprietor, and still they remained good friends. Dearer still, to some of us, is the memory of his friendship, indulgent yet exacting, as was right in a man of feeling and a complete editor.

“Close-ups” of editors, as the lingo of the cinema would have it; and the gallery of them can be extended, though not, perhaps, with the same working intimacy. Nobody could have had that with Sir William Robertson Nicoll, because he did most of his editing on the heights of Hampstead and only dipped down into Fleet Street once a week. This was when he put the “British Weekly” “to bed,” as the expression is about seeing a paper to press. A good deal has sometimes to be done at the last moment, and the old-fashioned editor, without any deputy, took care to be on the spot. Afterwards Robertson Nicoll would dine at the Devonshire Club with a circle of friends which would be sure to include Clement Shorter.

They had a long friendship, and once rather a

long quarrel, which they bore with mutual courage and resignation and ultimately made up. It had to do with some literary question, and there "W.R.N." was a far better authority than "C.K.S.," being, indeed, in every sense, a great bookman. Shorter was not less ardent in the cause of letters, and humanly he was kind but not always tactful about it. He had a gift for doing a friendly act in positively the wrong way, and then of being surprised and, in turn, nettled at the outcome.

Robertson Nicoll, on the other hand, judged merely by his presence and talk, might have been living up to the Scots proverb, "Ca' canny!" Actually, he had lots of leadership and go, and that was the greater a glory because, in his young manhood, he had almost been condemned by the doctors to die of consumption. They bade him nurse his lungs as he would his life, and for answer he came to London and entered upon one of the most successful journalistic careers of recent times.

Not only did he found an influential weekly paper, but he did much to build up a powerful publishing house, and he was always getting clever people to write, making them write, or writing himself. "His mind," said a popular Fleet Street baron about him, "was the ablest all-round mind I have known." It was remarkable not only for its

natural force, but for its range of scholarship and its grip of this world and other world questions.

Like Gladstone, Robertson Nicoll was a "Highlander in the custody of a Lowlander," for he was a blend of the two races of Scotland, and a brilliant instance. The Celtic element in him meant imagination and intuition and the Lowland element character and decision. The "native Doric" of Aberdeenshire lingered stoutly in his accent, and he spoke slowly, quietly, thought and word keeping pace with a moving finger, no doubt an action acquired in the pulpit. Old associations were tender to him, and when we met there was always, in our talk, a wisp of the mist on Morven, a far-seen hill which divides Deeside and Donside in the Aberdeenshire Highlands.

His father, Free Kirk minister of Lumsden, travelled up Strathdon every other Sunday, to hold service in what was known as the "tin kirkie" because it was built of corrugated iron. It was, so to speak, an outpost of his main charge, miles down below, and my grandfather and grandmother used to attend the service and take me toddling with them. How very long ago it is, and yet it seems like yesterday, for childhood abides in us all, and that is well.

But certainly it was an intimate and particular

link with Robertson Nicoll, who honoured it out of his own Scots brotherliness or "clannishness," whichever way you will have it. He was eminently Scots in his resilient spirit, in his resonant mind and in his physique, where he had the small bones of the Celt ; and there has been no Scotsman in Fleet Street who wielded more individual influence there, and in the country.

## XXI. TO-DAY AND TO-MORROW

*The New Fleet Street of a new age, faint, perhaps, but pursuing ; a stray light on where Barrie heard the wind that called Mary Rose to her Island ; and other revealings and gleanings of our Pilgrim Way.*

ONE wonders what Samuel Johnson and James Boswell would think of the New Fleet Street if they could return from wherever they may be and take a walk down it. They might have recognised its Victorian salute and even its Edwardian greeting, but to-day it has another face and another atmosphere.

What ghosts they would be to meet in the glimpses of the moon and take around, first to the old house in Gough Square which they knew so well. They would still know it, for, thanks to pious thought and care, it remains itself in a precinct of changes and the members of the Johnson Club might even be dining upstairs. "Sirs," he would say, climbing to them, "it is, indeed, an honour you pay me, and I thank you mightily."

How the New Fleet Street, keen for the "human

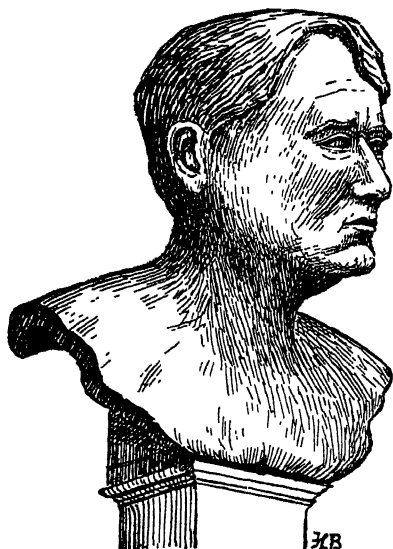


story," especially when it is veiled in mystery and needs unveiling, would leap to a return like that. Its young men are eager to discover and to tell, though there is no door to death, and thus they carry on, in their own way, the spirit of adventure which, like a King's writ, and often perhaps to the same end, has always run in the half-mile between Temple Bar and Ludgate.

Yonder, on the outer wall of St. Dunstan's Church, is a bust of "Northcliffe," whose insurgent and resurgent personality shook the walls of the Old Fleet Street. Glance at it, as you come east from the Strand, and you see a strong profile with a boyish twinkle in it, betokening a natural sense of fun and a gift for friendship. Take it as you go westward and it has the air of a Mussolini, not quite sure of himself, of a Cromwell, without the warts, or of a Napoleon Bonaparte, with the lock of hair falling differently on the brow.

Surely the tears and laughter of Fleet Street, and so of a wider life, are in that bronze face ; hope and a smile, comeliness and charm, on the side where the sun goes down ; ambition and power, success and distress, on the side where the sun rises. It is the wrong alignment, because the dawn should be simple faith and the twilight contented rest, whether or not with Norman blood. But the eternal,

impish will-o'-the-wisp which haunts Fleet Street, will have its little ironies with those who come that way, even if they leave footprints in its history.



*Nobody did more to create the New Fleet Street, in a journalistic sense, than Alfred Harmsworth, first and last Viscount Northcliffe, and now this bust of him looks out on it from the gable of St. Dunstan's Church.*

Once only I came into personal contact with Sir Alfred Harmsworth, as he then was, and this was when, about the high summer-time of his career, he lived in Berkeley Square. A few doors away

dwelt the Premier Lord Rosebery, and people said they were on saluting terms, as neighbours should be, but not on greatly speaking terms. Perhaps they both thought it was better not to let the accident of adjacence break into the gladiatorial rules of public affairs. But in their separate, lordly houses, they made a piquant contrast as statesman and journalist.

My mission to Sir Alfred Harmsworth was at the instance and command of others and had to do with a certain deadlock in Fleet Street. He was easy and pleasant, striking in face and head, and graceful in body and carriage, and, as I knew, a fisherman. He had been away in Hampshire all day hunting a trout with a dry-fly, and he had not caught it. This was a language I had learned young, with a wet-fly on Scottish streams, and so a point for natural talk, leading on to the purpose of my call.

What I had to tell him was what he wanted to happen a little later, and meanwhile we somehow got on to that famous pro-consul, Sir George Grey. A book of his memoirs, set down by myself, was coming out and, said Sir Alfred Harmsworth in a quiet, decisive voice, "Grey was a very great Englishman and he has never been properly recognised by his country. Cecil Rhodes, who should know an empire-builder, has often spoken

about him to me. Send me this book on Grey and I'll have it reviewed at once." He was as good as his word, and whenever I pass him, uncomfortable on his plinth at St. Dunstan's, I say, "Peace be with you !"

But there is no peace in journalism, which is a constant campaign in human drama and for that reason capturing and holding. "Once bitten, twice shy," says the proverb, but here the moral is exactly the other way about. Once bitten by Fleet Street, you are lost to it for ever, but well lost. You may not make history, though you might, but as a near onlooker, you see all the game, you are a chronicler of it, and that is more amusing. Even as a private person, you often make discoveries on which other people would never light, because a curiosity for knowledge in a born newspaper man becomes a sure instinct, like the spiritual side of sex in a woman.

Now, there was that attack of influenza, with a high temperature, and being bundled into a nursing-home on the fringe of Hyde Park. Next morning you said to the nurse, "An odd wind, wasn't it, half the night ? It seemed to come with a cry over the house-tops between here and Piccadilly, and then to fall, with a sob and a moan, into the flatness of Hyde Park." That was exactly one's odd feeling about it ;

and, "Yes," answered the nurse, "a strong wind, blowing here from the east, sometimes has that eeriness. It is probably explained by its sudden lift over high, obstructive buildings and then its plump down into Hyde Park."

Knowledgeable, if arguable, though not by a sick man, and, continued she, "Sir James Barrie heard what you have heard, when he was a patient once in this very room. That, we think, was how he got the notion for the souging wind from the island, in his play, 'Mary Rose.' " Another great "story," you observe, which the New Fleet Street, with all its skinned mental eyes, has, so far, missed. But it can afford to do that because it has so many "stories," usually, if you please, very well written.

There is more honest, human writing in the London morning papers than there has ever been, and it would rejoice the heart of Daniel Defoe, who set the tune long ago. He is the ultimate father of the writing style in Fleet Street at this modern age of realism, yet grace ; so let it be humble, because original it is not, and pay him a grateful recognition. His journal of the London Plague, and, as a tale of adventure, his "Robinson Crusoe," might very well be text-books in the art of writing for the papers to-day. Hasn't anyone "lifted" something by him, adapted it to an event of the hour, and

got away with it? For young departmental editors, in a hurry to discover talent, do sometimes get taken in.

The decorative literary style is out of fashion, though, coming from the ripe mind and the deft hand, it can still charm and hold. Simple directness is the note, and this is what is wanted by the general reader, young or old enough to have been educated in the first burst of the Board Schools. Lots of facts, plainly stated and grouped with drama, and, may be, a dash of sentiment—no more! That's the journalistic cocktail of the "best-sellers," and it gets over, whatever the cumulative effect may be on the mental nerves of the community.

It is a style in sharp contrast to that, say, of George Augustus Sala, when he was describing the scene at Evans's Supper Rooms, an old London haunt of his. "See," he wrote, "the pyramids of dishes arrive; the steaming succession of red-hot chops with their brown, frizzling, caudal appendages, sobbing hot tears of passionate fat. See the serene kidneys, unsubdued though grilled, smiling though cooked, weltering proudly in their noble gravy, like warriors who have fallen upon the field of honour." Splendid Salaese, but not the pen as it is wagged by the young paladins of the New Fleet Street.

What mirth, but also consternation, there would be among up-to-date sub-editors if they had to

make a "news story" of Sala's "russet leather-coated" baked potatoes, his poached eggs, "glistening like suns in a firmament of willow-plate," and his general "farinaceous effervescence." Sub-editors have become strangely exalted in the newspaper hierarchy, for, while formerly they just put reports in order, or cut them to the available space, they now re-write, "spatch-cock" things in, and generally make a new job of the subject on hand.

This mass work may make a paper more roundly informing, which is not always necessary, and more readable, always a virtue, but it has a withering effect on personality in writing. A poor devil of a reporter toils all day for his "story," writes it with his mind's blood, and when he sees it in print he hardly knows it. Was there not a witty London scribe who, in a moment of anger, apostrophised the up-to-date sub-editor in Lewis Carroll's lines :

*"For first you write a sentence,  
And then you chop it small ;  
Then mix the bits, and sort them out  
Just as they chance to fall ;  
The order of the phrases makes  
No difference at all."*

But inexorable youth, determined to attain literature in journalism, can always hope to reach

the signed-article stage. Then it will not have to fight a way through the House of Commons of Fleet Street, for the sub-editors are really that. It will go upstairs with its "copy" to the serener atmosphere of the editors, who are the House of Lords, though they are not Peers of the Realm, like some of their proprietors.

Possibly it is at this period of transition that a journalist of the New Fleet Street has second thoughts as to whether a good deal might not be said for the older journalism, with its blanket spaciousness of straight news and its full, deliberate leaders, like the broadsides of Nelson's "Victory." The leader has lost, to this swift, hustling age, its ancient pride of place and its stately dignity and the real impact of a paper on public opinion is now its news and its special articles, as well as its editorials. But the still, small voice, of what should be human communion and work-a-day counsel, will always hall-mark a paper's personality, as a beautiful speaking voice charms us. For, as Sir William Watson wrote after reading "Tamburlaine the Great" :

*" Your Marlowe's page I close, my Shakespeare's ope ;  
How welcome, after gong and cymbal's din,  
The continuity, the long, slow slope  
And vast curves of the gradual violin ! "*



One legacy, among many, from the Old Fleet Street to the New Fleet Street, is never to be afraid to quote poetry, if it will express what you want to say better than you could say it yourself. Even our young poets hesitate to quote the old ones, may be because, for personal reasons, they think it unnecessary. But the prose of books, as they pour out from the publishers, invades and pervades the newspaper. The new book, with news in it, served up in summaries and extracts, is all the go, though the critical review continues its ancient, necessary mission. It says everything for the writing in the modern daily paper that the best stuff from the best books blends imperceptibly with it. That, likewise, is a testimony to the ordinary reader, who has a surprising gift for knowing what is good, though he cannot always give you his reasons.

Anyhow, it is well that the "news stories" in current books should be getting full attention, and that suggests what a lee-way there is to make up. Think of the tales reposing in the literary treasures of the John Murray house in Albemarle Street, where Byron and Scott first met, and where they came downstairs arm in arm, being both cripple men and having dined well. One does not forget the thrill, though it was many years ago, of being introduced to these relics and guided among them

by the late Sir John Murray, whose good friendship and fine personality are a gracious memory.

Gems of Byronia, all bursting with real "copy" for the on-coming generation, which has still to discover old things and find them joyfully new. Byron's Bible, his snuff-box, with a lock of his brown hair in it, a draught-screen made for him by Gentleman Jackson, his trainer ! Priceless manuscripts, throwing lights of their own for Byronic young people, and one of them, recalling a controversy of the Eighteen-Seventies, when Browning criticised the poet's grammar. Particularly he cited a line in "Childe Harold," "And dashest him again to earth—there let him *lay*."

Gladstone joined in the controversy and pointed out that "lay" is used in a like manner in the "Sentimental Journey." Characteristically, he mentioned this as a "twin error not an excuse," and of Byron he gave what Sir John Murray thought an admirable summing-up. "Byron seems to me," wrote the "G.O.M." in a letter, also at Albemarle Street, "to have used the language always as a master, sometimes as a tyrant." It is not a bad motto for the writer in Fleet Street, because, when he becomes a master of English, we can afford to let him be its occasional tyrant.

The journalistic life, with its going backward for

the things worth keeping alive, and its going forward to the things worth doing, begets a unique experience of human nature, a quick understanding of it and a tolerant, Christian Spirit. No human fellowship is more loyal and kindly towards its various members and that warm thread knits rank and file. It is a democracy of good hearts, as well as of good heads, whatever hazards one may encounter by the way, and this daily thought sweetens the daily round, nourishes the joy of living.

Other times, other newspapers, other owners, and ours is an era of things on a big scale and so of big organisations. But the anchor of high tradition holds, qualified by the new conditions, and as one family retires with its generations of high-minded journalism accomplished, another family takes up the Fleet Street burden.

We need to use large maps when we view any phase of life or labour in the perspective of past, present and future, and journalism at its best is both a life's labour and a labour of love. It shows all our tracks and harmonises them into the picture which each of us works out for himself, unconsciously and therefore truthfully. Here enough of one traveller's pilgrimage has been told, not for itself, because that is nothing, but for what he has seen through a Window in Fleet Street.

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